

# **The Impossibility of Masculinity: Sexual Violence and Black Lesbianism in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

By

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## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

The construction of masculinity in post-apartheid South Africa is influenced by a number of historical, cultural and environmental factors. In a heteronormative patriarchal society, men have become obsessed with defining their masculine identity as something unrelated to homosexuality. Heterosexuality has therefore become ingrained in the identity of many men in South Africa. The fear of being labelled as homosexual has consequently led men to engage in harmful ritualized performances that are seen as contributing to the establishment of their manhood. Through this men are encouraged to publically display acts of violence – against women and other men – in order to demonstrate their adherence to the requirements of a successful masculinity. Furthermore, the attainment of a successful masculinity is dependent on the high levels of sexual violence against women in some communities in South Africa, and this highlights the impossibility of masculinity without violence.

This study looks specifically at sexual violence against black lesbian women in order to show how current forms of successful masculinity in South Africa are unattainable. The primary research question demonstrates this, and it aims to show how the relationship between black lesbianism and heteronormative masculinity in South Africa contributes to the impossibility of achieving an idealized version of masculinity. The secondary research question will assist in understanding this by looking into how sexual violence against black lesbian women can be perceived as a way for men to attain and stabilize a heterosexual masculinity. This study draws on four theories of rape to account for the prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa. The pervasiveness of sexual violence in South Africa is also used in the study to demonstrate how the perpetration of rape is an ongoing process because of men's attempts to prove their conformity to a masculine identity.

## **Opsomming**

Die konstruksie van manlikheid in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika word beïnvloed deur 'n aantal historiese, kulturele en omgewingsfaktore. In 'n heteronormatiewe patriargale samelewing poog mans obsessief om hul manlike identiteit te definieer as iets wat nie verband hou met homoseksualiteit nie. Heteroseksualiteit is dus vasgelê in die identiteit van baie mans in Suid-Afrika. Die vrees om as homoseksueel geïdentifiseer te word, het gevolglik daartoe gelei dat mans betrokke raak in skadelike geritualiseerde optredes wat gesien word om by te dra tot die vestiging van hul manlikheid. Hierdeur word mans aangemoedig om gewelddadig – teen vroue en ander mans – op te tree, ten einde te voldoen aan die vereistes van 'n suksesvolle manlikheid. Verder is die bereiking van 'n suksesvolle manlikheid afhanklik van die hoë vlakke van seksuele geweld teen vroue in sekere gemeenskappe in Suid-Afrika, en dit beklemtoon die onmoontlikheid van manlikheid sonder geweld.

Hierdie studie kyk spesifiek na seksuele geweld teen swart lesbiese vroue om te wys hoe die huidige vorme van suksesvolle manlikheid in Suid-Afrika onbereikbaar is. Dit word getoon in die primêre navorsingsvraag wat daarop dui dat die verhouding tussen swart lesbianisme en heteronormatiewe manlikheid in Suid-Afrika bydra tot die onmoontlikheid om 'n geïdealiseerde weergawe van manlikheid te verkry. Die sekondêre navorsingsvraag sal help om hierdie begrip te verstaan deur na te gaan hoe seksuele geweld teen swart lesbiese vroue beskou kan word as 'n manier vir mans om 'n heteroseksuele manlikheid te bereik en te stabiliseer. Hierdie studie gebruik vier teorieë van verkragting om rekenskap te gee vir die voorkoms van seksuele geweld in Suid-Afrika. Die voorkoms van seksuele geweld in Suid-Afrika word gebruik om te demonstreer hoe verkragting 'n voortdurende proses is as gevolg van mans se pogings om hul manlike identiteit te bewys.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction and Background**

### Gender-based violence in South Africa

Under the democratic government, women in South Africa have continued to make significant progress in terms of leadership and power. Yet, with every positive gain women have made in the country, there remains a parallel challenge to their advancement (Britton, 2006:145). Despite efforts by the South African government to address issues of human rights through the enactment of various laws, twenty-four years into democracy, violence against women remains rampant across the country.

Regardless of the attempts made to defend the rights of women, legislation has continued to provide women with little protection against violence and abuse (Mogale, Burns & Richter, 2012:581). Statistics provided by the South African Police Service (SAPS) show that sexual violence numbers have decreased from 2015–2016 (SAPS, 2016), but these numbers do not differentiate between the types of sexual violence, nor do they take into account the problem of non-reporting<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, legislation has proven to be an ineffective threat or punishment against perpetrators of violence and abuse.

Two of the most important laws that address violence against women are the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act 32 of 2007 (Mogale *et al.*, 2012:581). These laws have changed the way in which gender-based violence is recognized in the country by defining sexual violence and violence against women. The Domestic Violence Act demonstrates how this violence encompasses: physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; and stalking. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act highlights and expands the legal definition of rape (Mogale *et al.*, 2012:588). Nevertheless, both laws fail to provide adequate strategies that take into account cultural, social and economic factors, which are embedded in the acts of gender-based violence.

South Africa's history of colonization and apartheid left some populations of men – of all races – in the country with a higher status than other men, as well as women. This has created an assumption that cultural practices that favour men and police women's sexuality contribute to gender-based violence and allows men to own and control women (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana &

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<sup>1</sup> Between the years 2015 and 2016, a reported 51 895 incidents of sexual violence occurred, while 53 627 incidents of sexual violence were reported between 2014 and 2015 (SAPS, 2016:17). Furthermore, the South African Police Service demonstrate how sexual violence trends over a ten year period decreased from 64 071 reported rapes in 2006 to 51 895 in 2016 (SAPS, 2016:17).



Rose-Junius, 2005; Wallstrom, 2010). Most black women in South Africa remain unemployed or earn lower salaries than men. These factors, coupled with the cultural practices that favour men over women, have contributed to the negated social status of women in the country (Mogale *et al.*, 2012:582). This lack of social and economic freedom has increased the risk of women being affected by gender-based violence. Attempts by women to exercise their social and economic rights and freedoms may also result in violence against them (Mogale *et al.*, 2012:582). Reported incidents of rape increased with the democratic dispensation and South Africa resultantly has the worst rape statistics for a country that is not at war (Du Toit, 2014:101). Moreover, it is reported that one in five women in South Africa over the age of 18 experience physical violence at the hands of men (Merten, 2017).

A study undertaken by Kim and Motsei (2002) demonstrates how South African men use violence as a means to discipline women and as a tool for punishment. Women interviewed in the same study showed how normalized violence had become, stating that men who use violence are real men (Kim & Motsei, 2002:1246). The men further stated that the continued use of violence was because women enjoyed punishment: indicating that violence is often equated with expressions of love. In the same study, men explained that rape was something that was perpetrated by strangers to women – martial rape did not exist to these men – and that women often fabricated rape as an action of revenge against a man for terminating a relationship (Kim & Motsei, 2002:1246). The men revealed that it was impossible for them to rape women as they had the right to a woman's body, especially if they were in some form of relationship. This demonstrates men's entitlement to women's bodies and contributes to the high levels of gender-based violence in South Africa.

Moreover, South African masculine ideals give preference to heterosexual performances of toughness and strength (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle, 2011:2). These performances are predicated on the ability to control women through physical and sexual violence. Attitudes of men in South Africa towards sexual violence have demonstrated that these heterosexual performances are a way to gain self-esteem (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002:1238). Three variables in a research study conducted by Jewkes *et al.* (2011) stood out when asking men if they had previously raped a woman. These variables demonstrated that men raped women because of sexual entitlement, out of anger and for fun (Jewkes *et al.*, 2011:3). These attitudes towards rape show that men acknowledge raping women but that they always view their actions as justified.

### Black lesbianism and rape

Lesbian women in South Africa are an example of women who challenge the ideas around gender identity. Some of these women are sexually and brutally punished for their sexual orientation and their violation of the traditional gender presentation (Mieses, 2009:2). The sexual defilement of these women is referred to as “corrective rape<sup>2</sup>” where the purpose is to “cure” women of their lesbianism so that they can fulfil their traditional role as women (ActionAid, 2009:3). ActionAid (2009:8) reports that while 44 per cent of white lesbian women living in the Western Cape, South Africa, were fearful of violence against them based on their sexual orientation, 86 per cent of black lesbian women living in the same province were fearful of becoming victims of violence and corrective rape.

Referring to corrective rape as “corrective” obscures how all rape serves as a tool in the heteropatriarchal policing of sexuality and gender (Judge, 2017:68). The term “corrective rape” suggests that all lesbian women, because of their sexuality, are characteristically rapable. Media and activist articulations of corrective rape project a vulnerability onto the existence of black lesbian women (Morrissey, 2013:74; Judge, 2017:69). It also implies that a lesbian woman’s sexuality can be corrected: where non-conforming bodies are “correctly” gendered according to the heteronormative ideas of sex, gender and desire (Judge, 2017:70).

Additionally, the South African media constructs violence against black lesbian women as something exceptional. Black lesbian women who are attacked and violated are often reduced to their physical remains in news stories. This is evident in the story of Nontsikelelo Tyatyeka, where she is portrayed only as lifeless body parts that were returned to her mother (Judge, 2017:72). By describing only what remains of victims of homophobic-related violence, the media reduces black lesbian subjectivity to that of violence and fear. Furthermore, the behaviour of black lesbian women is offered as an explanation for the attacks against them. Through these media representations, homosexuality is portrayed as a dangerous sexuality that invites violence (Judge, 2017:73). In media reports of violent incidents against gay and lesbian individuals the victim’s demeanour, location and personal actions are always highlighted in a way that suggests that attacks could have been avoided.

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<sup>2</sup> The use of the term “corrective” proves to be problematic as it inherently assumes that lesbian women – and specifically black lesbian women – are in need of correcting because of their sexual orientation. This study uses the term because of how it is used in contemporary South African society by the men who perpetrate lesbian rape, but does not agree with the term. It is rape.

It is commonly believed that black lesbian women who reside in urban settlements are particularly at risk. Fear is racialized through the causal relationship with urban townships and other uninhabitable danger zones<sup>3</sup> (Judge, 2017:76). Individuals living in these communities already face cultural, economic and social discrimination. A desire to regain control may be a motivator for violence against black lesbian women. Moreover, South Africa remains a sexist, patriarchal society where violence is used to strengthen masculinities and one's sense of manhood – an area where men may feel they have more power (Reid & Dirsuweit, 2002:101). Violence and physical aggression have become some of the main outlets of men's frustrations as it allows them to display their masculinities. This results in an increase in violence against women, which gives men the ability to prove their physical strength over a being who they perceive as weaker (Du Toit, 2014).

The normalization of urban townships as places of queer fear is expounded by discourses blackwashing homophobia (Judge, 2017:76). Despite media portrayals – as well as psychological, symbolic and material effects of violence – not all black lesbian women live in fear of attack in South Africa. It is through violence that the black lesbian subject is legitimized as the sexual, racial and gendered other (Judge, 2017:78).

South Africa's constitution disallows discrimination based on sexual orientation. Nevertheless, there have been numerous recorded murders and rapes of lesbian women. Although sexuality is perceived as an issue belonging to the private sphere, the majority of social spaces of interaction are coded for heterosexuality (Reid & Dirsuweit, 2002:100). The power of this systematization is that homosexual individuals often find it necessary to portray themselves as heterosexual in order to avoid harassment. Incidents of harassment can be a result of lesbian women rejecting the sexual advances of men or merely looking too masculine and being perceived as abandoning a feminine identity (Reid & Dirsuweit, 2002:100). Lesbian women are perceived as threatening, but also as unavailable, to the men in their communities. Their sexual unavailability frequently contributes to the violence against them, exposing the vulnerability of male masculinities (Lock-Swarr, 2012:962). This simultaneously demonstrates that for men to possess power, and therefore a strong masculinity, they need to constantly engage in violent practices. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) illustrate how this continuous cycle

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<sup>3</sup> These areas are juxtaposed with areas that are known as historically white areas where gay and lesbian people are not as fearful for their lives.

of violence is indicative of how masculinity is unattainable. This is discussed further in Chapter Four.

In the settlement of Samora Machel in the Western Cape Sihle Sikoji was stabbed to death while walking with a friend in 2012. Sikoji's friend, who had survived the attack, reported that the men who attacked them had stated that they act like boys, and when Sikoji responded that they were not boys but women they were attacked (news24, 2012). In Khayelitsha, Cape Town, Zoliswa Nkonyana was stoned to death outside her home in 2006. The trial of her murder had been postponed eight times (ActionAid, 2009). Pumeza, another resident of Khayelitsha, stated that she and her girlfriend had to go into hiding out of fear of being caught by male attackers. She further states that they had been threatened every day, with a mob of men breaking into their house on one occasion (ActionAid, 2009:13). In 2010 Millicent Gaika was tortured and raped by her neighbour who wanted to "cure" her of her lesbianism (Koyana, 2013). Her attacker was imprisoned for raping her. Although Gaika's attacker was brought to justice, it is uncommon for corrective rape victims to come forward and demand justice.

Many victims of violence have stated that they are fearful of reporting incidents against them due to stigma, not being taken seriously or further harassment by police. Black lesbian women are often told they deserve the violence when they speak out about their trauma to family members or police officers (ActionAid, 2009:13). Furthermore, corrective rape is not treated as a hate crime, but rather as an extension of rape and so perpetrators are not jailed for hate crimes. Laws in South Africa that deal with hate crimes are narrowly interpreted as only affecting issues of race and gender and not sexual orientation (ActionAid, 2009:13). Corrective rape differs from the rape of heterosexual women because it is a hate crime: perpetrators of corrective rape seek to punish lesbian women for their sexual orientation. Male domination in South Africa has led to this type of gender-based violence; where women are forced to conform to gender stereotypes or suffer the consequences (ActionAid, 2009:3).

#### Gender-based violence and masculinities

South African society is constituted by principles of patriarchy. Patriarchy as a social system is defined as a family, community or society based on the system of male authority (Keevy, 2009:28). Patriarchy can further be explained as institutionalized social hierarchy where men have ultimate control over most aspects of life (Keevy, 2009:28).

According to Morrell (1998), the rise of Women's Studies in southern Africa resulted in questions being asked about men. Bozzoli (1983:149) coined the term "patchwork

patriarchies”, which recognizes the coexistence of multiple patriarchies in South Africa. The English speaking, Afrikaner and black culture patriarchies are a few mentioned by Bozzoli (1983:140).

Patriarchal societies such as South Africa favour certain gender identities over others; in this context, masculine identities are preferred to feminine ones. This results in power differentials between men who identify with a certain kind of masculinity and individuals – men and women – who identify with a more feminine gender identity (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:623). An additional result is the favouring of a specific type of masculinity over others, known as a hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1999).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was formulated as an attempt to understand various patterns of masculinity, as well as the overall gender hierarchy (Connell, 2014:6). A hegemonic masculinity refers to a specific pattern of masculinity that is most honoured. It is a masculinity that inhabits a central role in the structure of gender relations, whose position of privilege is used to stabilize the gender order and maintain the social subordination of women – as well as men who are unable to match the criteria of this masculinity (Connell, 2014:6). Hegemonic masculinity ultimately demonstrates that although multiple masculinities exist, one particular masculinity dominates and awards power and privilege to those who claim it as their own (Morrell, 1998:608).

Although hegemonic masculinities may differ across social contexts, some aspects are relatively common (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:624). One of these common characteristics is the idea that men need to be the primary breadwinners and provide for their families. Another commonality is that men are assumed to have a voracious sex drive, where having multiple sexual partners is praised. It is also believed that men have to display physical strength and demonstrate the use of violence in order to control others (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:624). These combined characteristics encourage men to become aggressive and contributes to the violence in South Africa (Ratele, 2012).

The emphasis placed on violence and aggression amongst men has led to the development of hypermasculinities. Hypermasculinity is conceptualized as a man’s tendency to adhere to rigid gender roles (Vasquez Guerrero, 2009:136). Hypermasculinities have three main characteristics: the belief that danger is exciting, viewing violence as an acceptable means of assuring dominance and having callous sexual attitudes that disregard women’s rights (Hamburger, Hogben, McGowan & Dawson, 1996). These characteristics, especially once

combined, indicate the likelihood of men perpetrating violence – specifically gender-based violence (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:623).

As previously mentioned, gender-based violence is more likely to occur within patriarchal societies where there are traditional gender roles and norms. Patriarchal beliefs – such as the belief that women should be controlled by men, or that men are entitled to sexual intercourse at any time – present themselves as variables that can be associated with gender-based violence in South Africa. This shows how the socialization that many South African men go through reproduces gender-based violence in their communities (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:623).

#### Reasons for gender-based violence in South Africa

Although South Africa is continuously hailed as an example of a successful, peaceful transition from racial segregation to an inclusive democratic government, the high rates of gender-based violence remain a problem. These high rates have led to a large body of literature focusing on the reasons for the violence. Accounts range from the impact and the legacy of apartheid to various dimensions of inequality. These foci as individual explanations do not expound the reasons for gender-based violence. Masculinities combined with certain factors, however, present viable arguments. These factors include apartheid and the normalization of violence, income inequality, hypermasculinities and militarization, and gender inequality (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:626).

The system of apartheid was based on a racial hierarchy that dehumanized those population groups not formally classified as white. Violence, aggression and brutality characterized this era in South Africa and were further normalized in everyday life, with the police and army forces using violence against those who opposed the white supremacist government (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:624). This gave rise to the idea of acceptable forms of violence, which were either used by the state or by those involved in the struggle against the state (Anderson, 2000). Resultantly, violence has been normalized where societal disapproval of violence decreases and the perpetuation of violence increases. Therefore, the normalization of violence under the apartheid legacy can be seen to contribute to the ongoing perpetuation of violence in the country today (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:624).

The use of violence has different impacts on men and women. Men are expected to resort to violence and display aggressive behaviour in order to achieve the standards of hegemonic masculinities. Under apartheid both white and black men were socialized to believe that violence is a defining feature of masculinities (Breckenridge, 1998:674). Violence became

increasingly common and, while people witnessed and experienced violence, it began to seem more acceptable as a way to achieve masculinities (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:625).

The danger of blaming apartheid for the perpetuation of violence is that it solely places the blame on men of colour, because these are the men that would have struggled to achieve the ideal masculinity constructed under the apartheid government. However, there is little evidence to suggest that white South African men are not perpetrators of any sort of violence. Apartheid can therefore explain the normalization of violence by black men in present day South Africa to an extent. It does not, however, fully explain why individuals from population groups that are not marginalized also perpetrate violence, and more than one population group is implicated in gender-based violence (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:625).

The second possible reason for gender-based violence is income inequality. The lack of opportunities under apartheid made it difficult for black people<sup>4</sup> to attain wealth. This resulted in the large income gap between a white middle and upper class, and a lower working class consisting of black people (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:625). Although South Africa is not the least developed country on the continent, there remains high levels of income inequality, high unemployment rates and extreme wealth inequalities (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012:13).

The strong impact of these income inequalities has often been recognized as a factor that contributes to the perpetration of violence. Men's inability to reach the social expectations of manhood may trigger the need to resort to violence due to an identity crisis. Frequently this results in the perpetration of gender-based violence where men feel they are able to attain some form of successful masculinity (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009:10). This approach suggests that there are links between poverty, income inequality and violence. It however implies that only marginalized men are involved in the high levels of gender-based violence in South Africa, because it is more difficult for them to achieve a successful masculinity. Violence is demanded from many versions of masculinities throughout South Africa as a primary means for men to demonstrate their masculinity. According to Moffett (2006:140), men rape not because of temptation, but because society tells them they can. The perpetuation of violence amongst men in South Africa is then not a last resort in response to an identity crisis, but a fundamental achievement of hegemonic masculinity (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:626).

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<sup>4</sup> This includes black, coloured and Indian people.



The third approach highlights hypermasculinities and the militarization of South African society. In response to growing civil unrest, the apartheid state increased the use of violence. The militarization of South African society was premised on a very particular construction of masculinity and citizenship (Conway, 2004:26). During periods of instability and conflict, masculinities become influenced by the military and the armed struggle. This militarization takes on particular gendered forms where certain types of masculinities are born out of this process for both white and black men in their respective communities (Gqola, 2007:113).

The pressures that society puts on men to achieve militarized standards of masculinity encourages them to use violence more than it encourages women to use violence. Therefore, because South Africa was a militarized society, the levels of violence perpetrated by men continue to rise (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:626). This militarization often leads to the culture of hypermasculinity where men are told to uphold and to value aggression and strength. Hypermasculinities are further related to gender inequality and the presence of a rape culture in South Africa (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:627). In South Africa, militarized masculinities have become mainstream. Consequently, violence has become normalized as another step to the achievement of manhood.

Another possible reason for gender-based violence in South Africa is the presence of gender inequality. This type of inequality generally occurs in societies where more traditional or conservative gender norms exist (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:627). These norms place men in dominant roles where women are subordinate and submissive, and they therefore provide justification for gender-based violence (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottmoeller, 2002). In societies where women are seen as less important than men and their lives are valued less, there is little hesitation on the men's part when it comes to abusing women. Additionally, societies that are gender unequal rarely allow women sexual agency and control (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017:626).

#### Research questions

Men are encouraged to display acts of violence and aggression as a way of demonstrating a successful masculinity. This is something that boys and men are taught throughout their lives. The desired masculinity amongst South African men therefore celebrates violence as well as domination over women. However, because of the never-ending cycle of violence, masculinity becomes something that cannot be achieved (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013).



The main aim of this thesis is to investigate if there exists a relationship between heterosexual masculinities and black lesbianism in South Africa. This study seeks to theoretically show that this link exists and that feelings of emasculation have led to an increase in sexual violence in the form of corrective rape in poorer South African communities. This leads to the primary research question:

*What is the relationship between black lesbianism and heteronormative masculinity that shows the impossibility of achieving masculinity?*

This study will also investigate if the rape of black lesbian women is perceived to give some South African men a sense of masculinity. This leads to the secondary research question:

*Can we consider the rape of black lesbian women an attempt to attain and stabilize heterosexual masculinity?*

#### Contribution of the study

The focus of this study contributes to the existing literature on the topic in multiple ways. Firstly, by focussing on masculinities this study contributes to understanding the construction of masculinities and how men are increasingly encouraged to exhibit violence as a way of demonstrating successful masculinity in South Africa. This study demonstrates how structural violence is embedded in South African society by focussing on the lives of black lesbian women. Furthermore, it contributes to both the study of masculinities and studies on black lesbianism in South Africa by proving that there exists a relationship between how masculinities are constructed and sexual violence.

The study further contributes to literature on corrective rape by providing insight into why homosexuality threatens the patriarchal social order of South African society. This is demonstrated in Chapter Four where the research questions are answered.

#### Research design and methodology

A case study design is used to enable researchers to focus on a single group, community, individual, etc. The research questions asked by the researcher allows for the case study to be more focused and narrowed down. In case study designs there are often strong theoretical dimensions that are incorporated. Case study designs are usually of a qualitative nature, as the data cannot be generalized and is usually case study specific (Burnham, Gilland, Grant, & Layton-Henry., 2008). For this research study, the case study design is the most appropriate and will be used to bring focus on black men in South Africa who interact with black lesbian women in townships in attempts to attain a successful masculinity.

The theoretical framework draws on theories of rape. These theories will assist in comprehending the position of black men in South Africa and the history of the subordination of an African masculinity through the long period of colonialism and apartheid. When this is understood, it will also assist in developing a narrative that deals with why some black men in South Africa engage in acts of sexual violence against black lesbian women in their township communities. Furthermore, this study will demonstrate how conditions in townships create environments where men are able to rape.

The rape theories will also expand the understanding of why men in South Africa resort to rape. There have been many assumptions that attempt to provide an answer to this question, and these will be examined in order to determine the correlation between the struggle for the attainment of masculinity and corrective rape within poorer South African communities of the Western Cape.

The purpose of this thesis is to theorize the relationship between the construction of masculinity and sexual violence against black lesbian women in post-apartheid South Africa. The study will draw on existing theories of rape in order to determine why men resort to sexual violence against women, but also to show gaps in these theories regarding the rape of black lesbians. This study will also look at literature regarding masculinities in the country as well as how these are constructed, achieved and maintained throughout a man's life. Studies that have conducted primary research on these topics will be used for this thesis. The study will theorize the inability of attaining masculinity and how violence is used to police women's bodies who are seen to transgress traditional gender roles and heterosexuality in South Africa. The literature for this study has been gathered from predominantly secondary sources. Books and journal articles have consulted, along with news articles – as there are numerous examples of violence against black lesbian women in contemporary South Africa.

#### Outline of the study

*Chapter One* of the research study has provided an introduction to the research study. The research design and research methodology has been given, as well as the research questions for which the study aims to provide answers. The objectives of the study have been stated clearly in addition to the significance of the study to the present day, as well as future society.

*Chapter Two* of the study consists of a literature review, which includes all the relevant literature that has already been covered on the topics of masculinity and perceived emasculation. The construction of masculinity in post-apartheid South African society will be examined to provide insight into the reasons why men behave in certain ways. It will also be

looked at in relation to homosexuality and how this influences men's attitudes towards being perceived as gay and the general belief that homosexuality is a Western construct that has been imported to Africa.

*Chapter Three* focuses on the theoretical frameworks of rape in South Africa constructed by Louise du Toit. Du Toit (2014) provides four frameworks that seek to answer the question of why men in post-apartheid South Africa rape. This chapter further demonstrates counterarguments to the above-mentioned theories of gender-based violence in South Africa. Chapter Three shows that sexual violence against women is premeditated and is perpetrated with vicious intents. Although these theories focus on why men rape, they do not provide reasons to why lesbian women in post-apartheid South Africa are raped. However, if these theories of rape are not examined, there are no possible explanations to why lesbian women are raped.

*Chapter Four* aims to address the research questions, which have been outlined. The objective of this chapter is to assess how the black lesbian body is perceived to stand in the way of men attempting to achieve an ideal form of masculinity. This chapter demonstrates that black lesbian women are perceived to emasculate men for two reasons: firstly, because they are seen as competition for the affections of straight women and, secondly, because they are sexually unavailable to men. Resultantly, black lesbian women are not seen as real African women because of their sexuality. Chapter Four further offers insight into how corrective rape is used as a tool to govern and police the sexuality of black lesbian women and to "correct" them into heterosexuality in order for them to be true African women.

*Chapter Five* offers a conclusion to the study by providing a summary of the research's findings. It also provides possibilities for future studies and recommendations for these.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The growing interest in the research on boys and men – both in South Africa and internationally – has provided additional insight into the study of gender. The term “gender” has, in most instances, been primarily associated with women, yet it has always carried with it the social representation of both men and women and therefore of both masculinities and femininities (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema, 2007:1).

Masculinity, like femininity, is nothing more than a gender identity. It is not a natural physical attribute that is allocated to individuals at birth. They are both socially constructed and fluid. Hence, it can be said that both masculinities and femininities are situated in the changing structures of relationships that individuals hold. Additionally, societal changes may affect how masculinities are perceived and formed over time. Masculinity, however, has not been subjected to the same scrutiny as femininity – much like the privilege of whiteness or heterosexuality. Therefore, in the binarism of gender, men have benefitted most in terms of privilege (Shefer *et al.*, 2007:2).

### **The othering of the black body**

There are multiple aspects that have contributed to the black masculine identity in South Africa over the past several decades. In order to comprehend the contestations that have been produced through the construction of masculinities in South Africa, it is imperative to look to the period of colonialism and the constructions of race and sex. The understandings of race and sex that were produced during this era influenced stereotypes about blackness, which led to the overgeneralization of the black identity (Ellapen, 2006:49). This construction of the black body during colonialism had been “fixed” through stereotypes. “Fixing” through stereotypes establishes the “other” as that which is known, while also repeating and reinforcing boundaries that have been created through stereotypes (Ellapen, 2006:49). The “other” is produced as a social reality, which is both visible and known but simultaneously different (Ellapen, 2006:50).

It is possible to trace the construction of blackness as a stereotype against which whiteness could assert its prominent position in society back to the eighteenth century, to scientific racism (Young, 1996). Scientists developed a vocabulary to speak precisely about racial differences between white and black people. This vocabulary aimed to differentiate the black body from the white body, and the biological differences that were highlighted through these studies set the tone for the othering of the black male body through psychological, physical and intellectual characteristics (Ellapen, 2006:49; Young, 1996:39). Scientific racism was therefore based on

the differences between white and black people. These “natural” differences could not be contested. Due to this, it was normal to perceive the black body as inferior to the white body: the “natural” differences were used to not only describe variances between races, but also between the uncivilized bodies and civilized bodies (Saint-Aubin, 2005:23).

This “scientific research” became obsessed with classifying the black body as a sexual body. Classifying black bodies in this manner contributed to the already widespread belief about the hypersexuality of the black man all over Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Ellapen, 2006:50). The hypersexuality myth became associated with the sexual freedom of the black male, and it contributed to the conclusion that Africans were on par with animals when it came to the ability to control their sexual desires (Young, 1996; Saint-Aubin, 2005). This provided further “evidence” that the black body was inferior.

European science in the eighteenth century became more and more focused on establishing and fixing boundaries between races. According to Saint-Aubin (2005:25), this was due to the perceived fear of the loss of self that is believed to occur when racial boundaries are considered fluid. The “scientific theories” that were developed because of this fear emerged as a defence mechanism that served to control the black body by casting it into natural “otherness”. Bhabha (1992:133) argues that this stereotype should be read in terms of Sigmund Freud’s “fetish”; where it can be understood as both a phobia and a fantasy that threatens the colonial subject. When considering the stereotype in these terms, desire for the “other” results in stricter terms of control because the desire threatens the coherent self of the colonizer. The fear that is derived from the stereotype develops narratives and myths about the “other” that become established in society as a means of distinguishing the self from the other (Bhabha, 1992:133).

Young (1996:39) expands on this by stating that the skin becomes the visible marker of difference between bodies, and this difference is constructed as natural. Because of the naturalness of this difference, discrimination becomes justifiable. The identity of the black subject becomes overdetermined and experiences become fixed because of the hypervisibility of the skin (Ellapen, 2006:51). The black man, according to Fanon (1952:109), becomes aware of himself through the gaze of the white man. Fanon furthers this by stating that the black man knows himself only in relation to the presence of the white man (1952:109). The white man defines the black man in relation to his skin colour, whereas for the black man the white man represents everything that he desires to be (Loomba, 1998; Fanon, 1952). Fanon (1952:109) goes further to state that the only time that the black man will not experience himself through

others – except through minor internal conflicts – is when he is amongst his own people. Blackness through the gaze of the white man is reduced to nothing more than cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, and racial defects (Fanon, 1952:112). Through this, the black man is created by the white man through myths and stereotypes. Blackness then confirms white bodies, but drains the black body (Loomba, 1998:144).

Maggot (2007) notes that men acquire their sense of maleness through their lived experiences. Physically, this maleness grows through a personal history of social practices. Men then come to know themselves through their experiences with others. Thus, the body becomes an important factor in terms of being able to meet hegemonic ideals of performance standards of the body – whether this relates to labour, sport, or sex. According to Maggot (2007:19), the body possesses economic value. The use of one's body in terms of labour and physicality is associated with a certain class: the working class. Furthermore, class and race associations are stereotyped with particular uses of the body. Maggot (2007:20) argues that the body embodies many social structures and concepts. The body is consequently political, and it becomes involved in a man's sense of identity and wholeness.

The body further possesses attributes of power, and the expression of this power may come with physically overpowering another male, which affects a man's sense of maleness. Maggot (2007:20) argues that every human body is open to and requires other bodies in order to survive. The power that these bodies possess is however not of equal weight. Bodies are therefore constantly vulnerable to, and at risk of, other bodies (Maggot, 2007:20). Furthermore, the moral rights of the body are enforced through: one's physical ability to keep others away from it, social norms, customs and legislation. Through this understanding, bodies can be seen as a site where social meanings can be inscribed (Maggot, 2007:21). Bodies are used to create meaning through social interaction, and this interaction affects the identities of those involved. These interactions are also symbols of power. Maggot (2007:21) makes use of the example of a handshake, where men are judged on their handshakes based on the power that is exerted through this act. There are others who argue that the body has no relation to the construction of masculinity. The body in these instances, like masculinity, can be seen as a social construct that bears the imprint of society and does not represent that which is naturally superior or inferior (Morrell, 1998:607).

According to Ellapen (2006:53), apartheid in South Africa was an invention of Afrikaner nationalism whose purpose was to construct the black identity as the “other” in relation to the

white identity. Apartheid saw the marginalization of non-white South Africans through the idea that in order to be socially accepted one had to be white, or had to be able to pass as white. In apartheid South Africa, much like the colonial experience elsewhere in Africa, blackness was constructed in relation to whiteness. This blackness resembled a lack of power, whereas whiteness reasserted power, hegemony and dominance in society (Ellapen, 2006:54).

The black identity in apartheid South Africa became stereotyped as the “other” due to ideologies constructed by the Afrikaner Nationalist identity. Bhabha (1992) adds to this view by asserting that identities formed under colonialism are never stable. The identities of the “other” are always formed in relation to the colonial desire. Throughout South Africa’s history, white masculinity has always been perceived to be threatened by black masculinity. Because of this threat, black masculinities – as well as masculinities that did not conform to the white hegemonic masculinity – were oppressed (Ellapen, 2006:55).

The history of South African society is heavily characterized by separation. Policy frameworks had been used with the aim of establishing and maintaining the separation of different races, ethnicities and identities of South Africans. This separation ensured the fixing of identities within specific geographic zones. The identities of men and women were then determined by which zone they inhabited. Morrell (1998:616) notes that along with the separation of races came the demarcation of masculine identities between white men and black men. According to Morrell (1998), black masculinity was constructed as deviant and projected as the “other” through the control and dominance of white masculinity. White masculinity in South Africa exerted hegemony over all other forms of masculinity and was predominantly concerned with controlling, monitoring and surveying the masculine identities of black men (Morrell, 1998:611).

Morrell (1998) reiterates that not all masculinities are equally powerful. In South Africa, there exists a hierarchy of masculinities in operation (Morrell, 1998). The masculinity that is at the top of the hierarchy at the time possesses dominance and oppresses alternative masculinities. Morrell (1998:608) suggests that the hierarchy of patriarchy can be divided into four categories of masculinities: dominant masculinity, complicit masculinity, submissive masculinity and protest masculinity. These masculinities determine and define the relationships and interactions that men have with each other in society. There may be contestation between these types of masculinities, but because each category is fluid it may be difficult to determine a man’s “membership” to one particular category (Morrell, 1998:607).



The dominant masculinity in society is identified as the hegemonic masculinity. Dominant masculinities do not refer to headcounts, but is rather a question of cultural domination and subordinating other masculinities. The advantage of the hegemonic masculinity is that it “bestows power and privilege on those men who adopt it and claim it as their own” (Morrell, 1998:608). This masculinity is seen as the cultural ideal. White masculinity enjoyed the uncontested dominance as the hegemonic masculinity in South Africa until democracy in 1994.

When attempting to understand the construction of masculinity in South Africa it is important to consider the country’s past. According to Ellapen, (2006:58), the construction of black masculinity is strongly related to the sense of place, or placelessness, that informed the manner in which the black body had been subjected to regulations under the apartheid government. The 1936 Native Trust and Land Act formally separated black and white areas, where black people were confined to reserves. According to Morrell (1998), these reserves resembled social and political systems of pre-colonial structures and were characterized by homesteads, communal land, kinship networks and chiefs.

The rapid influx of rural Africans into urban areas came with the growth and industrialization that accompanied the end of World War Two (Morrell, 1998). This resulted in the stricter enforcement on influx controls by the apartheid government, with the aim of allowing a “skilled black urban population to stabilize while keeping the surplus population in the reserves, cut off from urban labour opportunities” (Morrell, 1998:622). According to Ellapen (2006:59), the influx of this labour force was a cause of anxiety for the apartheid government, which resulted in the passing of yet another policy: The Group Areas Act of 1950. This policy led to the development of the township. This in turn saw government advance policy that aimed to keep rural black workers separate – mainly migrant workers who returned home after their contracts ended (Ellapen, 2006:59).

The rural black populations and the urban black populations gave rise to two different types of black masculinity in South Africa: the African masculinity and the urban black masculinity (Ellapen, 2006:59). Morrell (1998:615) suggests that the African masculinity refers to the rural black masculinity, and this masculinity was the hegemonic masculinity in the reserves as well as in pre-colonial society. The African masculinity became closely synonymous with the African identity that was characterized by ancestral and tribal ties (Ellapen, 2006:59). Because of this close association, discourses surrounding the African masculinity were based on the representations of African cultures through the process of essentialising Africanness.



The urban environment that allowed for the urban black masculinity to develop was characterized by culturally diverse and racially inclusive areas such as Sophiatown and District Six. Morrell (1998:625) notes that, although this urban masculinity rejected the traditionalist values of the African masculinity, they were never truly devoid of rural experiences as the black male constantly moved between urban and rural areas. This urban masculinity was redefined through new styles of dress, different modes of behaviour and the open disdain of the life in rural areas.

The rapid development of mining in the urban areas demanded an increase in black labour. The majority of the black men who came from the rural areas worked in the mines. Mine work was characterized as dangerous work requiring physical strength, and it became synonymous with the masculinity of the black body (Morrell, 1998:623). Black men had the option between this work and what was considered “women’s work”. The latter, however, resulted in the emasculation of men. According to Ellapen (2006:60), the emasculation of black men occurred on multiple levels in South African society and in many contradictory ways – from the infantilization to the hypermasculinization of black masculinity (Morrell, 1998:611). The hypermasculinization of the black man becomes a way of emasculating the black body as it reduces black masculinity to the experiences and actions on the bodily level (Ellapen, 2006:60). The division of black men into African masculinity and urban masculinity represents an inherent contradiction in how the black identity is portrayed in the South African landscape. According to Ellapen (2006:61) this division does nothing but essentializes the black identity.

After South Africa transitioned to democracy in 1994, it was inevitable that the hierarchy of patriarchy would be reconfigured. The “other” became redefined, and the operation of power was reconstructed. Hegemonic masculinity is never stable or fixed, but rather changes with the status quo. During the period of apartheid rule in South Africa white masculinity had possessed power and privilege. According to Ellapen (2006:62), at the dawn of democracy in 1994 the challenge that faced South African society was how to address the “injustices of the past by positioning black masculinity as the dominant form of masculinity”.

#### The construction of masculinity amongst young men in post-apartheid South Africa

According to Shefer, Stevens and Clowes (2010:512), the majority of research on masculinities in South Africa focus on areas of social concern; where boys, men and masculinities are presented as problematic, violent and dangerous. The dominant discourses that shape these studies also focus solely on the unequal power relationships between men and women. Ratele (2014:118) further notes that in contexts where countries undergo rapid change in their

economic, political and social systems – such as South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994 – significant groups of men find it increasingly difficult to achieve what has been historically considered a successful masculinity.

Masculinity is for the most part something that needs to constantly be attained through various practices where a man is able to assert his dominance over women, as well as other men. Masculinity is therefore not something with which individual men are born, but something inspired by a set of socially grounded ideas that take shape in children’s lives that allows them to comprehend themselves, others and the world around them (Ratele, 2008:3). According to Kimmel (1994:120) manhood is not something that is determined by biology, but rather by culture. And because culture is something that is constantly shifting, masculinity and manhood is in constant reformation.

The dominant forms of masculinity that are present in South Africa not only have a negative impact on the rights of women and girl children, but it also undermines the wellbeing and health of men and boys (Shefer *et al.*, 2010:516). Ratele (2008) has raised multiple concerns about the risks for boys and for men that accompany the dominant masculinity in a specific society. To assist his argument, he highlights mortality rates among young, poor men through aspects of violence and other risk-related factors (Ratele, 2008:11).

Conway (2001:101) highlights how the patriarchal nature of apartheid, the gendered crisis of violence and the HIV pandemic in South Africa have all contributed to the formation of specific masculinities in the country. South Africa has faced multiple challenges pertaining to the demilitarization of masculinities because the state itself had been based on the symbols of victory and conquering. Conway (2001:101) mentions that the state still plays an important role in the formation and the monitoring of masculinities in the country.

Shefer *et al.* (2010:512) note that there has been an inherent concern about masculinities in South Africa, which have been constantly portrayed as problematic. The emphasis on sexual violence and the focus of boys and men as perpetrators of violence in the country since 1994 leads to further political and ideological anxieties about men rather than focusing on the imperatives of gender justice (Posel, 2005). This problematic view is further reproduced when there is a focus on poor young black men – domestically in South Africa, but also internationally. In the South African context, studies that focus on poor young black men may have contributed to the blaming and othering discourse; where these men are perceived as the problem and are further associated with danger (Ratele, 2014; Ratele, Shefer and Botha, 2011;

Bhana and Pattman, 2009). A change in discourse is necessary, as suggested by Shefer *et al.* (2010:516), as the vulnerabilities of boys and men are not taken into account. Research emphasis on boys, men and masculinity has shifted from a problematizing narrative to the construction of masculinity and sexuality within the context of HIV/AIDS and male violence (Shefer *et al.*, 2010:512).

The increased risk of violence perpetuated by poor young black men in South Africa, according to Gibbs, Sikweyiya and Jewkes (2014:1), puts these men and their partners at risk of contracting HIV. Gibbs *et al.* (2014:1) references the rapid growth of urban informal settlements in the 1980s under the apartheid government and how this was met by failed permanent housing needs.

Furthermore, the authors note that these urban settlements are often settings that are plagued by high levels of violence, poverty, poor health and HIV. According to McIlwaine (2012), one argument for why urban informal settlements have high levels of violence and poor health can be explained by the experience of high-density communities, which inevitably leads to the creation of stress and the inability to control certain aspects of life – a key factor in the shaping of violence. Another argument highlights that informal settlements have less social cohesion due to poverty and mobility, which creates less stable forms of power. Violence then becomes an important and necessary resource as previously stable configurations of power are challenged (McIlwaine, 2012). This power reconfiguration is particularly aimed at gender power, which sees men exert their power over both other men and women. A population-based study of South African men undertaken by Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli and Garcia-Moreno (2013) demonstrates that those men who have employed violence on their partners possess less gender impartial masculinities. These men were also more likely to have raped and/or engaged in transactional sex (Fulu *et al.*, 2013). Men who fell into this category who were under the age of twenty-five also demonstrated a higher prevalence of HIV.

The attempt to build a relational construction of gender inequalities draws on Connell's (1999) notion of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1999) states that in any given social setting there arises a collectively held understanding of ideal male practices. These ideal practices are viewed by men as an aspiration. This influences their practices, structures, and their understanding of themselves and their behaviours. Although this masculinity is held by men as being the ideal aspirational masculinity, not all men will necessarily be able to achieve this (Connell, 1999). Connell (1999) notes that in response to the inability to achieve this

masculinity, men construct substitute masculinities that allow them to establish viable alternatives to the hegemonic masculinity whilst simultaneously supporting the overall logic of it. Hegemonic masculinity affects the behaviour of women as well, despite the subordination to men. According to Connell (1999), hegemonic masculinity influences women's view of a desirable ideal man, and the men who do not adopt the hegemonic masculinity may have their attractiveness to women penalized.

The behaviours of men that are high-risk related practices, which may or may not be linked to HIV, can be understood, according to Gibbs *et al.* (2014:2), as attempts to position themselves individually and publically in relation to the hegemonic masculinity. In the context of high levels of poverty, young men construct a subordinate masculinity that focuses on heterosexual performance and violence as an alternative way of contributing to their sense of self-worth, as well as providing a way in which they can position themselves within the gender and social order in subordinated spaces (Connell, 1999). When exploring the relationship between men and violence, two schools of thought have emerged. One side accentuates men's power and dominance and the use of violence against women and other men; the other side focuses on the emotional lives and vulnerability of men living in poverty (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:2).

This has led to work suggesting that men's violence stems from feelings of powerlessness; where they then seek power in alternative, more accessible, ways (Ratele, 2013:253). Mathews, Jewkes and Abrahams (2011) further demonstrate how men's history of violence can be traced to childhoods that are harsh and lead to attachment disorders which results in reduced empathy and guilt in adult men. Mathews *et al.* (2011) suggest that the patterns of violence and other risk behaviours are set-up in childhood psychological development processes, and then later enabled through social process and contexts to support violent behaviour.

During apartheid South Africa, a new masculinity emerged for young black men employed in working class jobs as a result of industrialization. This masculinity focused on heterosexual patriarchy in which masculine respect was underpinned by male economic provision (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:2). A man's masculine identity was judged according to his ability to provide for a household. This masculine identity, according to Gibbs *et al.* (2014:2), was articulated through the assertion of control over women and children. This masculinity can be seen as a sustained hegemonic masculinity given that it continues to dominate the gender hierarchy for many working class black South Africans.

It can, however, also be viewed as an alternative masculine identity that was established amongst a group of men who were not able to achieve the hegemonic masculinity during the time of apartheid. An example given by Wood and Jewkes (2001) of alternative masculine identities demonstrates how economic marginalization of young men in the Eastern Cape has led to the creation of a youth masculinity that focuses on controlling main female sexual partners, with the use of violence if necessary. A similar example given by Ragnarsson, Townsend, Ekstrom, Chopra and Thorson (2010:3) indicates how men in search of alternative sources of power in peri-urban communities also develop substitute masculine identities that focus on seeking multiple sexual partnerships, which allows them to prove their masculinity among other men.

Additionally, the changing family structures in South Africa contributes to the search for alternative ways for men to prove their masculinity (Morrell, 2006:15). The presence of a father in a child's life in the country is not only threatened by socio-economic circumstances, but also by HIV/AIDS – which leaves many families deprived of adult figures due to either death or illness. In these instances, it is not uncommon for older siblings to take on parenting roles (Morrell, 2006:15).

However, the specific point at which a boy becomes a man remains a contested topic that varies depending on contexts. For boys, the transition to manhood means that one ceases to be a minor. It is important to note that this transition does not take place within a political vacuum and that manhood can be associated with a plethora of rights that will allow them to marry, to vote, own a gun and to open a bank account (Morrell, 2006:16). These rights, which are awarded to men at different points in history, demonstrate the idea of manhood that is associated with that period. During apartheid, black men were denied rights that were awarded to white men. Moreover, during this period, rights that were awarded to men may have been at the expense of women and children, and it is because of this that feminists have remained cautious of approving of manhood as desired stage of masculinity (Morrell, 2006:16). Masculinities should instead focus on aspects of responsibility and care, rather than focusing on how men should possess power to dominate women and children (Morrell, 2006:23).

Achieving manhood involves physical growth and some definitions of the concept require a maturity of the male body. Most definitions, however, involve a choice or an act on the part of young men and the social acceptance by older adult men. In these instances, rites of passage are emphasized (Morrell, 2006:16). For example, ejaculation indicates that a boy can become

a father: signifying that he can be physically considered a man. Zulu traditions historically support full interactions and relations between boys and girls – including sexual interaction. Thigh sex (*ukusoma*) is encouraged, but vaginal penetration by a boy is still prohibited until after the boy's initiation and the negotiation of bride wealth. This example demonstrates how a sexually mature body is not an automatic entry for boys into manhood (Morrell, 2006:16).

Fatherhood has also become synonymous with manhood in South Africa, and it is seen as a masculinity for which should be strived. Nonetheless, there has been growing concern about absent fathers in South Africa. Fathers can be absent physically, emotionally or both. Although research has suggested that children need fathers in their lives, it remains difficult to demonstrate that absent fathers are a serious issue in children's lives (Morrell, 2006:18). In terms of emotional absence, certain perspectives view an African father as someone who provides for the family, protects the family, takes responsibility, is a role model and invests in his children's lives (Morrell, 2006:18). A father is therefore someone who is emotionally and physically available to his children and accepts the responsibility for the family. One reason that is suggested for men not taking on the role of the father is because of a lack of resources. Poverty heavily undermines the role of fatherhood and the level of involvement of fathers. Fathers who are unable to meet the criteria of what is considered to be a father's responsibility, to provide for his family, are more likely to abscond from the role of a father. These conscious decisions, which are made regarding fatherhood, affect and have implications for gender relations, health and prospects of children (Morrell, 2006:18).

The migrant labour system in South Africa has generally dissolved various aspects of family life. Men were gone for eleven months of the year, and women were left to raise children and lead lives of celibacy (Ramphela & Richter, 2006:74). These relationships were already fragile because of long periods of separation between husband and wife, and husbands would physically and sexually abuse women who were suspected of infidelity when they returned home from their work. Furthermore, these men would often abandon their families because of low wages and being unable to send enough money back home (Ramphela & Richter, 2006:74). Because of this, children grew up with absent fathers. Additionally, influx control regulations meant that women and children could not accompany men to the urban areas where they worked. Under apartheid the Group Areas Act, the Black Communities Development Act, the Black Administration Act and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act all allowed the government to control land and the regulation of the African population (Oliver-Evans, 1993:3). According to Ramphela and Richter (2006:74), many women braved the threat of

arrest under the influx control regulations in order to be with their husbands, but in the process left their children with grandparents or other relatives.

Within impoverished communities in Africa, a man is usually the main source of income, and because of this he commands respect when he is able to provide. A good father then does everything in his power to provide opportunities for his children; whereas a bad father neglects the responsibility of fatherhood in its entirety (Morrell, 2006:20). Some men are simply unable to fulfil the expectations of being a provider. This occurs when men have many children, and it is further compounded by shrinking labour markets where employment cannot be found. The shame of being a bad father drives men away from the responsibility of fatherhood (Morrell, 2006:22). Middle-class men can generally adopt the role of a father, which includes being a provider, a protector and a caregiver. This is a privilege that not all men have. Working-class men and unemployed men have access to fewer resources than middle-class men. Therefore, they cannot provide for their children, or employment opportunities demand that they work far away from their children (Morrell, 2006:22). Apartheid have impacted the circumstances in which fathers are able to provide for their children. Fatherhood in contexts of poverty focuses primarily on men playing the role of provider and protector. In instances where material circumstances are secure, fathers are expected to be more engaging with their children (Morrell, 2006:22).

Fatherhood remains an integral element in the construction of masculinities although it remains interpreted in different ways. Some men may claim manhood simply because of the conception of a child. Fatherhood may also be understood as conferring a responsibility to provide and protect (Morrell, 2006:23). Masculinities that foster the values of both responsibility and caring should be encouraged. Furthermore, masculinity should not claim that fatherhood grants men power over women and children.

A study undertaken by Gibbs *et al.* (2014:3) demonstrates how young black South African men who live in contexts of poverty seek to construct and to sustain a viable sense of respect and masculine identity. Shefer, Kruger and Schepers (2015), in a similar study, indicates how young black and coloured men in low income urban neighbourhoods reflect on masculinity as “simple, physical, and dangerous”. They established that young men aspired to a “traditional” masculinity, which is closely linked to a masculinity that emphasizes the provision for a family, as well as control over a partner and children (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:4). Additionally, these young men prioritized economic independence as this enabled them to achieve the aforementioned



goals. The young boys also emphasized that to be a man who always borrows money was unacceptable in their communities.

Furthermore, the young men discussed the use of violence to settle disputes. For some of these men, owning guns and knives – as well as possessing the willingness to engage in violent behaviour – was seen as important. Amongst other young men who prescribed to the more “traditional” masculinity, gentleness was prioritized along with aspects of love, kindness and engagement with children (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:4). The young men who stressed these qualities maintained that men need to have respect towards women and need to be disciplined.

Although most young men in the study strived for the “traditional” masculinity, they were aware that this was aspirational and remained something that they struggled to achieve, as they were often still dependent on mothers or grandmothers for financial support. This dependency undermined the men’s sense of confidence and masculinity (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:5). Without any formal work, most of the young men spent time on the streets. This allowed for the public devaluation of these men by the community who did not respect them because they were unemployed. The young men in the study emphasized that a man without work is viewed as useless given that no one can depend on him (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:5).

Another concern amongst the young men was their inability to provide in sexual relationships. These men saw this as both frustrating and embarrassing, and further explained that women looked down upon young men who could not give them what they wanted sexually. Shefer *et al.* (2015:104) noted something similar in their study of masculinity and sexuality amongst young men in South Africa. Shefer *et al.* (2015:10) established that young men perceive women to have the potential to humiliate, punish and shame men – whether in public or private spheres. Within urban informal settlements, these young men had become aware of where other members of their community had placed them within the gender hierarchy, and how they were positioned as children for failing to meet society’s expectations of men (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:5). Respect, for these young men, could alternatively be earned through men’s main sexual relationships, violence and control over female partners, having multiple partners demonstrating desirability to women, and finally public violence (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:5).

When it came to long-term sexual relationships, most of the young men in the study said that they had a long-time female sexual partner. When these men spoke about their relationships they framed them similar to the relationships they viewed as falling within “traditional” masculinity that they aspired towards (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:5). The young men distinguished



between the women who they had long-term relationships with and those who they had other relationships with, which was often nothing more than a sexual exchange. Long-term relationships came with emotional investment, demonstrating pain that would accompany the ending of such relationships. In these long-term relationships, men placed significant emphasis on trust and love. This was symbolized by the lack of the use of condoms. If either one of individuals in the relationship wanted to introduce condoms, it signalled a breakdown in the trust and love that these men sought to attain (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:6). In their study, Shefer *et al.* (2015) demonstrate that dominant forms of masculinity hinder the practice of safe sex by privileging male sexuality over the use of condoms. The boys in this study also expressed that to be a man is to engage in sexual relations “flesh to flesh” (Shefer *et al.*, 2015:100).

The men stated that their long-term female partners could not have relationships with other men, but they as men they were able to do so in the form of sexual relations with other women. Multiple sexual partners was something these men strived for, as it proved their masculine identity amongst their peers. This reflects the idea that is presented in some research, which suggests that men are rewarded for sexual activity while women are punished for it (Shefer and Foster, 2009). A few of the men emphasized a cultural aspect to having more than one sexual partner, but the majority of the men underscored earning respect and dignity amongst other men; being perceived as a “player” amongst their peers demonstrated successful boyhood. It also demonstrated publicly their proof of desirability and their performance of heterosexuality (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:7). According to Shefer *et al.* (201:99), the prioritizing of the public performances of heterosexuality, the distancing from feminine or gay boys and men, and the physicality and violent performances of hegemonic masculinities is central to the shaping of dominant masculinities in South African communities. These hegemonic social norms were described by the young men as reinforced through peer pressure, where the men constantly had to negotiate their masculinity and sexuality.

The importance of men having sexual relationships is emphasized amongst boys in the study undertaken by Shefer *et al.* (2015), which focuses on masculinity and sexuality. The masculine status that the young men aimed to achieve amongst other young men frequently depended on their public denial of respectful ways of engaging with female sexual partners (Shefer *et al.*, 2010:102). The performance of masculinity amongst the boys therefore rested on disguising desires and vulnerabilities that contradicted dominant male performances by actively engaging in dominant male sexual practices. Engaging in sexual practices resulted in the achievement of successful masculinity (Shefer *et al.*, 2015:102). The vulnerability depicted in this

understanding of masculinity illustrates the instability of masculinity itself and the fear and insecurity that are embedded in the importance in achieving this.

Young men voiced that they would be shamed and silenced if they were virgins. Those who were virgins were constructed as men who lacked power, and were often on the receiving end of public humiliation and peer pressure to engage in sexual relations with women (Shefer *et al.*, 2015:102).

When it came to the control over their female partners, the men spoke freely about the techniques that were used to exert this control. This included violence (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:7). The use of violence against their partners is an active strategy that is utilized in order to achieve respect and a social position, which they felt they had been denied. The young men being able to control and limit their partner's autonomy shows how men sought to ensure that women would be faithful to them. This inability to control a woman's behaviour devalued the young men's sense of self (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:6). Men turned to violence in their relationships when other controlling mechanisms failed to work. Violence is used as a mechanism to re-establish the gender order – through enforcing women's subordination to men – and the man's position and respectability within the social hierarchy.

The young men identified many various ways in which women could disrespect them, and where violence was a legitimate way in which they could reassert their power and dignity. The above-mentioned scenario of being cheated on was one of the main concerns, but also present was women's growing economic autonomy and a concern that this would lead to women disrespecting men (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:6). Women who refused to have sex with the men were also potential victims of violence, reflecting the ideas of entitlement that the men possessed. Empirical studies in South Africa have shown that there are high rates of men who admit to perpetrating rape or sexual coercive practices, which further enhances arguments that state that violent sexual practices are endemic in normative heterosexuality (Shefer *et al.*, 2015:102).

Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013:17) mention that what is regarded as natural in terms of male heterosexuality includes multiple sexual relations and displays of sexual potency. Gender and sex then become inseparable and are predestined because of biology. When this applies to rape, women will always be silent victims of the expressions of men's biological drive (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:19). Men are taught how to be masculine through different narratives. These narratives encourage violent behaviour amongst men, but also frame women and the feminine as in need of protection. Rape becomes sexed and gendered where the division

between victims and perpetrators follow the female and male binary. Those who are seen as the perpetrators of rape are seen as masculine, where masculinity is a learned attribute (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:22). Victims are gendered as feminine, which often equates to the female body. Male bodies, however, can also be feminized through the act of rape.

Reading rape in this manner demonstrates how masculinity is something that is constructed, rather than inherent to the male body (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:22). The challenge of masculinities is then teaching problematic masculine constructs to children. Reproducing masculinities in negative ways then leads to the production of violent men. Problems that arise between the genders, according to Eriksson Baaz & Stern (2013:22), are because of the understanding of the genders.

Gang rape is identified by Chabra, Rai and Chacko (2014:9004) as a way in which men are able to prove their masculinity. Gang rape generally involves more use of violence against victims, and this violence is usually met with less resistance from victims than in cases of individual rape. Individual men have proven to be more likely to present aggressive behaviour while in groups. For men involved in gang rapes, one reward is that there is greater camaraderie amongst participants of the act. Another reason for the act of gang rape is for a man to maintain an authoritative image within the group. The participation from other members of the group can also be attributed to emotional dependency on the leader or indebtedness to the leader (Chabra *et al*, 2014:9004).

The authors explain that there are three reasons for gang rapes, which may assist in understanding why it is so easy for groups of men to turn to sexual aggression and rape. These reasons include diffusions of responsibility, de-individualization and modelling (Chabra *et al*, 2014:9005). Diffusion of responsibility diminishes an individual's sense of responsibility for the act because of the presence of others performing the same act. An individual male involved in a gang rape does not feel like he is solely responsible for the condition of the victim (Chabra *et al*, 2014:9005). De-individualization refers to the loss of self-awareness that occurs within a group setting. This includes loss of morals, beliefs, standards and ideals. The loss of self in an individual can lead to a stronger promotion of the group spirit, and may even prompt behaviour in a group setting that would otherwise be unacceptable at an individual level (Chabra *et al*, 2014:9005). A strong sense of camaraderie within a group can promote de-individualization with the substitution of individual beliefs with group beliefs and history. If one's sense of identity is stronger with the group it would stand to reason that an act such as gang rape would

be regarded as acceptable. The last influence on the group dynamic is modelling. When the first two aspects of diffusion of responsibility and de-individualization takes place, a group identity can produce conformity. Partaking in a gang rape then not only demonstrates that the act is acceptable but also demonstrates how the act is done (Chabra *et al*, 2014:9005).

Women are punished through the act of rape when they exude confidence in their equality. Rape as a form of punishment is widely used in South Africa and takes of different forms. Gang rape in South Africa makes up a third of all rapes, and its most common form is that of “jackrolling” where gender and sexual norms are policed (Lock Swarr, 2012:974). A few well-known cases of jackrolling have been inflicted on women because of their choice of attire. In Umlazi, outside Durban, well-known publicized attacks were inflicted on women for their choice to wear pants. The men who perpetrated the attacks were known as the “pants mobs”. In one instance, a woman was assaulted, stripped naked, and paraded through the urban township. Furthermore, the woman’s house was burnt by the men (Stolley, 2007). In a separate case, four women at a taxi rank in Johannesburg were sexually assaulted for wearing miniskirts (Vincent, 2008:11). Both these cases demonstrate how a climate of fear for women is created in South Africa through the mass control of the female body through the enforcement of gender norms and cults of femininity (Dosekun, 2007).

Violence towards other men was also emphasized as a means of proving one’s masculine identity. A man achieves this through proving his readiness to defend his honour when he felt he had been insulted by another man. The resort to violence in these situations is often compounded by the use of alcohol or drugs (Gibbs *et al.*, 2014:7). According to Shefer *et al.*, (2015:104), a masculinity that has been shamed results in violence, and this shame is often an obstacle when it comes to loving and/or respecting others.

#### Understanding race and sexuality in South Africa

South Africa’s colonial history lasted for 350 years and only officially ended in 1994 when the country held its first democratic elections. During the period of apartheid, white supremacy was personified through the Afrikaner nationalism, which aimed to maintain a position of privilege in the country. The apartheid regime built on laws that were established in 1910 under the Union of South Africa, laws which limited the rights of black people such as the Land Act of 1913 and the Urban Areas Act of 1923 (Gunkel, 2010:29). Later, the Population Registration Act of 1950 was imposed on the whole country, and it made use of a classification system that was based on invented biological grounds. The official classification of people as African, coloured, Indian/Asian, or white was the result of this law. These races were further categorized

as pure or impure. African, whites and Indians were regarded as pure races, whilst coloured were seen as mixed and therefore impure (Gunkel, 2010:29).

Not only were people in South Africa divided through the Population Registration Act, but the introduction of the Group Areas Act further separated the different classifications of races. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this then led to the formation of the township (Gunkel, 2010). This demonstrates how the apartheid government managed to successfully implement what Foucault referred to as “fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls” (2004:255). Simply put, this refers to dividing a country along racial and ethnic lines in order to better control the population groups. This endeavour to differentiate bodies and groups of bodies within the population is what Foucault (in Gunkel, 2010:29) refers to as biopolitics. Racism allows for hierarchies to be established between people in societies by falsely demonstrating how one racial group is superior to another, and it further provides a rationale as to why the separation of races is necessary in order for certain populations to succeed (Foucault, 2004).

Gunkel (2010:29) states that while the aim of the apartheid government was the separation of the races lawfully, it simultaneously regulated sexuality by linking it to race. Sexuality was seen as the biopolitical interface between the individual body and the population body, and it was for this reason that it became the target of power (Gunkel, 2010:29). From the beginning, sexuality was focused on by the apartheid regime. This is evident by the number of laws focusing on sexual relations that were introduced in the first ten years: The Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act of 1949, the Immorality Act of 1950 and the Sexual Offences Act of 1957. Through the regulation of sexuality, the apartheid government sought to police the private lives of people in the country (Ratele, 2001). Gunkel (2010:30) notes that what Ratele (2001) fails to mention is how heteronormativity formed part of the apartheid regime’s political project. According to Dyer (1997:25), heterosexuality will almost always fall in with the concept of race as race itself is about bodies, and heterosexuality is seen as securing the reproduction of bodies. The apartheid regime’s goal was racial purity and to secure racial purity government had to secure reproduction (Gunkel, 2010:30).

For Africans to claim that homosexuality is un-African is essentially then to reproduce Western racist images of African sexuality, and to defend the othering of African sexualities (Van Zyl, 2005:23). Statements made by African leaders regarding homosexuality on the continent reiterate a populist understanding of the colonial history of the continent (Gunkel, 2010:44). In this way, the postcolonial government has in fact not shifted away from the apartheid form of

thinking about heteronormativity and the nation. Gunkel (2010:44) makes reference to an article published in the *Sowetan* newspaper in 2005 by sports writer Molefi Mika where Mika deliberately attacks the South African women's national soccer team for having lesbians on the team. In the article, Mika links sexuality to postcolonialism by implying that the gay and lesbian movement hijacked the anti-apartheid movement and tried to benefit from the national liberation struggle by demanding human rights (Gunkel, 2010:44). Mika further expresses his wishes to live in a country such as Zimbabwe where there has been open disapproval of homosexuality by former president Mugabe. Throughout the article, Mika demonstrates how the postcolonial subject is only allowed to be heterosexual (Gunkel, 2010:44). He adds how the national women's soccer team should be seen as role models and, more importantly, as women. He demonstrates his concern regarding the ways femininity is represented and constructed and through his analysis shows that he does not consider lesbians to be women. He demands that the soccer players not act as men but rather as women who walk around in high-heeled shoes (Gunkel, 2010:45). Mika links together sex preference with gender preference, by viewing lesbian women as unfeminine, sex maniacs who wear loose clothes designed for men. He then directly links femininity to heterosexuality.

Through linking femininity to heterosexuality Mika creates a decolonized heterosexual subject, as well as a gendered subject position that is based on heteronormative femininity (Gunkel, 2010:45). This production of sexuality according to heteronormative values reinforces the conservative gender roles of women as wives and mothers. The implication of doing so, according to Gunkel (2010:45), is that the focus on reproduction and reproductive acts secures a gender regime that encourages male dominance in society. Gunkel (2010:45) further notes that this argument serves as a crucial historical reference point for claims regarding homosexuality as un-African. The aim of such a claim is to secure the normative femininity and the hegemonic masculinity that are represented through heterosexuality and the political institution of the family (Gunkel, 2010:46).

According to Ratele (2014:118), African men do generally dominate women in their communities, and sometimes this domination is pushed onto other men. This dominance falls in line with attaining an African hegemonic masculinity. As stated by Ratele (2014:118), given the nature of South Africa's history – its colonial background – African masculinities are simultaneously hegemonic and subordinate. This contradiction is discussed as being difficult to solve. It is also within this context that homophobia and gender-based violence provides insight to the explanation of why it remains difficult for men to attain and maintain a

traditionally hegemonic African masculinity. In this instance, the homosexual is what the true African is not, and one of the defining features of the dominant male position is characterized by violence. Leaders in Africa – whether political, cultural, or religious – have all expressed homophobic sentiments and have blamed the West for the imposition of homosexuality (Ratele, 2014:118). Then according to this rhetoric, a true African man is one that is heterosexual, and a true African woman is one who is sexually available to him (Ratele, 2014:124).

Black lesbianism in South Africa is then a psychosocial threat to gender and sexual identities, which includes a form of hegemonic masculinity that is threatened by female sexuality (Ratele, 2014:123). Black lesbians remain the targets of hate speech and physical violence (Gunkel, 2010). These forms of violence are similar to the aggressive acts against heterosexual women and include sexual bullying, harassment and unwanted advances (Ratele, 2014:123). Ratele (2014:123) notes that the violence that occurs against lesbians – or women perceived to be lesbians – is therefore entangled with sexualized gender prejudice, hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, which can be fuelled by culture, religion and social conservatism. Ratele (2014:123) further explains how homophobia and sexism are mutually constitutive. Women are always perceived as possessing fewer rights and freedoms than men. This includes sexual freedom.

The threat of rape and gender-based violence is something which is extended to all women and girls, but is often specifically aimed at lesbian women, transgender women and other queer subjects who threaten hegemonic masculinity (Ratele, 2014:124). As mentioned, a real African man is seen as a being that is heterosexual, and a real African woman is a being that is sexually available to men. Black lesbians are therefore not seen as real African women, as illustrated through the ideas expressed by Mika. Lesbians are considered to be transgressing gender and sex norms by presenting a sexuality that is independent of men (Ratele, 2014:125). Lesbians who are “butch” are specifically targeted because of their visible masculinity, which disrupts the gender hierarchy by symbolically claiming male privilege.

According to Gunkel (2010:46), sexuality is thus used as a “national or cultural identity-building project that leads to the homogenization and naturalization of culture”. These narratives often include myths about identity and imaginaries of the self that provide cultural material for an individual to constitute a personal sense of gender and sexuality (Gunkel, 2010:46).



Most countries on the African continent share a history of colonialism and the fight for independence. The definition of the nation-state and its boundaries on the continent are based on the colonial logic of the past, and the need to protect these borders has its roots in the past. To therefore fully understand how sexuality, gender, and politics intersect in South Africa it is imperative to understand how race and sexuality – and therefore the individual body – have been constructed through the European colonial project.

### Homosexuality and Africanness

According to Kopano Ratele (2014:115), hegemonic African men and masculinities are generally disturbed by the existence of homosexuality and sexualities that do not conform to heteronormativity. Like Shefer *et al.* (2007), Ratele (2014:116) notes that the masculine identity is not something with which male children come into the world. He states that masculinity is a historically located cultural project that places sexuality at its core. The masculine identity, for Kimmel (1994:133), presents men with complex sexual fears that plagues their existence, including the fear of heterosexual males not meeting the standard of hegemonic masculinity.

Homosexuality and non-heteronormative sexualities, along with homophobia, has a significant role when it comes to practices, identities, constructions and the social reproductions of hegemonic African masculinities. According to Ratele (2014:116), current reports of homophobia do not acknowledge that non-conforming sexualities do in fact have a fundamental impact on the configuration of hegemonic men's gender practices. In other words, issues of lesbian, gay and othered sexualities are vital for a more complex understanding of the making, construction and reproduction of the ruling forms of masculinity and gender in Africa (Ratele, 2014:116).

Apartheid's legal and social system did not protect the minority sexual inclinations of gays, lesbians and transsexuals (Ilyayambwa, 2012:51). Condemnation, exclusion and punishment by law is the reality for many gays, lesbians and transsexuals, because their sexual orientation differed from the norm in the country. Ilyayambwa (2012:51) notes that with a new constitutional democracy beckoning in the country, gays and lesbians – mostly from the white middle and upper classes – who had organized under the apartheid government were ready to fight for recognition and protection under the new constitution.

The National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality became one of the most successful non-governmental organizations that had bridged the gap between legal and social change in South



Africa. The Coalition brought the economic and civil rights concerns of gay and lesbian South Africans to the courts, mainstreamed the gay rights struggle among the poor and assisted in providing education to those who were most impoverished under apartheid about their rights (Massoud, 2003:302). Furthermore, the Coalition's first submission to the Constitutional Assembly states that the constitution enshrines the right to possess differing views and to live varying lifestyles. The submission states that the constitution cannot only reflect and enforce the views of certain religions as this would endanger the pluralism and diversity of the country, and this would ultimately threaten South Africa's commitment to transcending the discriminatory past. According to Ilyayambwa (2012:52), the efforts of the Coalition were met with hostility, stigma and opposition with comments being made about how homosexuality would destroy family values and the moral fibre of South African society.

The new South African government reinvented its commitment to equality by becoming the first African country to recognize the rights of bisexual, transgender, gay and lesbian citizens (Morrissey, 2013:73). Morrissey (2013:73) explains that South Africa, like other postcolonial countries, has a history plagued by the struggle for independence. The South African government's commitment to equality was evident in the constitutional commitment to the rights of gays and lesbians (Morrissey, 2013:73). Equality, however, remains a deeply controversial social idea. According to Ilyayambwa (2012:51), in its most basic definition equality refers to the formal idea that "people who are similarly situated in relevant ways should be treated similar". He further notes that it would be logical to then assume the opposite, where people who are not situated in similar ways should not be treated alike (Ilyayambwa, 2012:51).

The new South African constitution, established in 1996, also became the first in the world to prohibit the discrimination of individuals based on sexual orientation (De Vos & Barnard, 2007). The 2000 Equality Act moreover outlawed hate crimes, which included discrimination based on sexual orientation. This act was followed by the Civil Union Act of 2000, which legalized same-sex marriage and gave same-sex couples the option to register their relationship as a marriage or a civil partnership (Morrissey, 2013:73). Yet, despite the constitutional protection of the rights of gay men and lesbian women, violence and prejudice towards these population groups persists in South Africa. The nation has mostly failed to control the hostility that both women and sexual minorities continue to face, as the new constitution does not reflect the sentiments of most South Africans (Thorenson, 2008; Massoud, 2003:304).

Reid and Dirsuweit (2002:99) have provided some reasoning for the motives behind the continued violence. They state that the Constitution has enabled a more public homosexual landscape, which has led to the subversion of the heterosexual landscape, and gay men and lesbian women become victimized in a response to this subversion (Reid and Dirsuweit, 2002:100). The authors further notice that the police statistics that monitor the crimes against homosexual individuals are concealed within broad statistics, as the government does not keep specific details relating to these crimes.

Graziano (2004:303) observes that for black gays and lesbians, life can be seen as being the same as it was under the apartheid government. Under apartheid, homosexuality was punishable with up to seven years in prison. In the South African Defence Force, different tactics were used in order to “cure” conscripts of homosexuality. These tactics involved aversion therapy where electronic shocks were administered while images of naked men were shown to those suspected of homosexuality (Kaplan, 2004:1415). Furthermore, gays and lesbians under apartheid were considered criminals and perverts and were ultimately rejected by society (De Vos & Barnard, 2007:797). These experiences of exclusion and marginalization were intensified based on the colour of one’s skin. Black gays and lesbians are still seen as deserving eradication and attack in some communities (Graziano, 2004:303).

In southern Africa, the discussion around sexual identities has been visible recently. Although South Africa has included the rights of gays and lesbians in the Constitution, other countries in the region still do not recognize gays and lesbians as deserving citizenship rights. In most parts of Africa, homosexual and non-heteronormative practices, desires and relationships are largely unseen. According to Ratele (2014:125), this is not due to the fact that they simply do not exist, but is in actual fact representative of how the acts are prohibited by society and legally criminalized. Discourses around sexuality in Africa all represent Africans as being born heterosexual, which creates perceptions that shift in order to shape a certain type of reality (Ratele, 2014:125).

Former Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe has on many occasions voiced his opinion on homosexuality and Africanness, where he described gays and lesbians as being worse than pigs and dogs (Gunkel, 2010:25). He further stated that homosexuality was an example of a rotten culture, and that it has been imposed on Africans by the British government. In 2000 Namibia’s minister of home affairs urged police to arrest gays and lesbians and to eliminate them from the face of Namibia, while the president had stated that homosexuality is a threat to the national

government (Gunkel, 2010:25). Horn (2006) notes that in 2006 President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria had pronounced homosexuality as un-Biblical and un-African. Other officials in countries such as Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and Swaziland all claimed that homosexuals are equivalent to external threats to the nation (Epprecht, 2004:5).

In 2009 David Bahati, a Ugandan member of parliament, had proposed tighter restrictions of homosexuality through the introduction of a new bill. The bill sought to introduce the death penalty for individuals who were accused of aggravated homosexuality (Cheney, 2012:78). Aggravated homosexuality included actions such as commissioning same-sex acts with minors, family members, disabled persons, or instances where the “aggressor” is HIV positive (BBC News, 2009). The bill further makes it compulsory for individuals to act as informants to the police if they discover another individual’s homosexuality. A parliamentary committee found that these laws were weak and redundant, and they therefore were not passed. Despite not being passed, the bill raised concerns about homosexuality in the broader African context, and it acted as an instigator in homophobic acts (Cheney, 2012:78).

Central to the argument against homosexuality is the issue of tradition, African culture, reproductive rights and human rights (Cheney, 2012:79). Herdt (2008:3) speaks about sexual panics and how the case of Uganda presents an example of moral panic. He notes that in cases such as Uganda, where there are outcries of sexual panic, there is the creation of enemies in the form of sexual scapegoats (Herdt, 2008:3). Moreover, the creation of sexual scapegoats ensures that sexual and reproductive rights are removed from individuals and entire communities. The establishment of sexual panic has the power to further increase the prevalence of mechanisms in place for surveillance, regulation, discipline and punishment of the sexual other in the name of morality and tradition (Herdt, 2008:1).

The sexual panic that has occurred in Uganda, and elsewhere in Africa, is based on the notion that homosexuality is un-African. Homosexuality is referred to as an imposition from the colonial government. Despite the rhetoric around the colonial imposition of homosexuality, there are historical accounts of same-sex relationships – both social and sexual – amongst various ethnic groups in Uganda (Cheney, 2012:81). In the African context, same-sex relationships are regarded as unnatural, and products of disease and mental illness where there is a presence of Christianity and Islam (Murray, 1998:270). This panic similarly demonstrates how distinct the African understandings of homosexual acts, homosexual identities and lifestyles are. This is due to the homogenization of sexuality through the process of

globalization, which has ultimately led to the sexual binary of hetero and homo (Foucault, 1990:43; Cheney, 2012:81).

The moral sexual panics that have endured in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa are based on arguments for preserving tradition, and these arguments are again used as a defence against modern ideas of sexuality. In these instances tradition is rewritten and used for specific political agendas – although this is happening on both sides of the debate (Cheney, 2012:81). Constructing homosexuality as immoral and as a threat to national survival intensifies the view that the sexual identity is responsible for the social ills that have become increasingly present in the postcolonial era (Lorway, 2008:150). The amnesia experienced in many postcolonial states therefore constructs the African continent as one that is purely heterosexual, and the argument of tradition is used to cement this idea while simultaneously erasing same-sex social practices from history (Cheney, 2012:83).

The narratives linking un-Africanness and homosexuality are however not excluded from South Africa. Gunkel (2010:25) notes that it is in fact proliferated in public discourse and is a popular opinion held by a significant number of South African citizens. Although the Constitution protects the rights of gays and lesbians, many religious leaders, politicians and nationalist voices continue to feed homophobic discourse in the name of culture and tradition (Gunkel, 2010:25). The homophobic positions that have been taken by leaders across Africa are reiterated in South Africa through various forms of media. Homosexuality is seen to be a product of westernization, a form of cultural imperialism and a by-product of colonialism. Gunkel (2010:26) notes that there is some truth to these statements as the identification of homosexuality and sexuality are Western constructs. She further states that although homosexuality can be justified as a Western concept, this does not mean that same-sex intimacy does not, and did not exist in African history, as there is a range of work that provides both historical and cultural evidence of male and female same-sex intimacy in various countries on the continent. Murray and Roscoe (1998) provide the example of Khoi-Khoi males who were sexually receptive to other males as early as 1719. Another provided example indicates how, in early twentieth-century Zambia, an Ila-speaking man dressed as a woman, did what was regarded as a woman's work and shared beds with women (Murray and Roscoe, 1998). Furthermore, in the 1950s in the settlement of Mkumbani – adjacent to Durban, South Africa – male-male weddings were bountiful and occurring at a rate of roughly one a month, and same-sex intimacy was encouraged amongst younger boys experiencing puberty as a way of experimenting in sexual relations (Bourdillon, 1995). Graziano (2004:304) notes that one of

the best documented examples of same-sex intimacy in Africa was amongst the mine workers in South Africa. These workers were separated from their wives and girlfriends, living in all male compounds. According to Graziano (2004:304), adolescent boys frequently visited the compounds in order to provide sexual services to the workers. Similar to this, young girls in Lesotho often developed close relationships with older young women while their husbands were away working in mines (Graziano, 2004:304).

These examples of same-sex intimacy, however, are not always regarded as homosexual (Gunkel, 2010:26). Foucault (1990) demonstrates that the homosexual identity only became available through modern regimes of knowledge, which were constituted at the end of the nineteenth century. He further argues that sexuality in this period became the primary target of power, and this was directly linked to colonialism and racialization, as it is demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

Gunkel (2010:26) states that overemphasizing the discourse of homosexuality as being purely Western creates a further divide in postcolonial states, and it can actually prove to be counterproductive and damaging to those that it is supposed to benefit. An example used by Gunkel (2010:26) to show this counterproductivity is the case of African LGBTI Human Rights Defenders, Peter Tatchell and his London based organization called Outrage!, which addressed issues of sexuality in Nigerian politics. The organization was accused of being exploitative as well as being harmful to local activists. In this case, the actions of an international organization was not considered as an example of global solidarity, but rather as an interference with local politics (Gunkel, 2010:27). This type of intervention becomes problematic when those researching the lives of black gays and lesbians only focus on hate crimes, rather than examining why gay rights are such a contested topic in the lives of decolonized subjects in the broader African setting, and more specifically in South Africa (Gunkel, 2010:27).

The idea of homosexuality being outside of culture and tradition is however not something new to either the African continent or the world. Gunkel (2010:27) notes that opposition to homosexuality on the grounds of tradition and culture has been considered pro-American, pro-Indian, pro-Iraqi, etc. Apartheid nationalists also considered homosexuality as something from which they needed to protect Afrikaner boys. Sinfield (1994) demonstrates that in American culture and tradition during the Cold War, homosexuality was deemed as a phenomenon that could corrupt the constructions of masculinity, femininity and family values of the citizens. Gays and lesbians were therefore seen to be threats to the American way of life (Sinfield, 1994).

It is further noted that homophobia in America is not so much directed specifically at queer individuals. Rather, the homophobic rhetoric is itself used to control and discipline the heterosexual majority of the population (Sinfield, 1994).

On the topic of homosexuality in Uganda, Tamale (2003:2) remarks that, like in most African countries, gays and lesbians have been the target of malevolence and rage. She demonstrates how homosexuals in the country have been blamed for violence and paedophilia, and that same-sex boarding schools have been argued to breed homosexuality. Although present-day Uganda is characterized as homophobic with the introduction of anti-homosexuality law in 2014, Tamale provides insight into the country's history of homosexuality to demonstrate that the homophobic attitudes of the citizens cannot be based on culture and tradition (2003:2). In the pre-colonial period in Uganda homosexuality was neither suppressed nor condoned. In northern Uganda, males were treated as women and could even marry other men. Homosexuality was further acknowledged among the Iteso, the Bahima, the Banyoro and the Baganda populations. Within the Buganda monarchy there is a long history of homosexuality where it was no secret that some of the rulers, like Kabaka Mwanga, were openly gay (Tamale, 2003:2). Tamale attributes the homophobic attitudes of Ugandan people on the dominant Judaeo-Christian and Arabic religions that are foreign imports to the country and continent (2003:2). Religious and cultural fundamentalism has played an important role in monitoring the sexual pluralism in Uganda, and any deviation from heteronormativity is deemed as a pathological problem and unnatural.

Additionally, there is a gendered dimension of sexuality when considering the removal of the lesbian identity in Uganda as the phallocentric culture maintains that women are the passive recipients of penetrative male pleasure (Tamale, 2003:3). Sex, in this instance, is then not considered "real sex" if it is not penetrative. Women's sexuality in Uganda is for the most part diminished to conventional roles of mothering and child bearing. What therefore threatens patriarchy is the idea of same-sex relationships where no dominant male is present, and where a woman's sexuality is not defined by her role as a mother or as a bearer of children (Tamale, 2003:3). Ratele (2008:2) similarly notes that where the ruling masculinity is in support of women being subjected to men, there is also the support of female sexuality and pleasure to be subordinate to male pleasure. In situations where this is challenged, the preservation of the gender hierarchy within a patriarchal structure is threatened because there is no longer power along sex lines.

Gunkel (2010:28), like Tamale (2003), considers it impossible to fully comprehend the expressions of homophobia in South Africa in a postcolonial context without understanding that sexuality and race cannot be separated the way it has been in historical contexts. She adds that apartheid in South Africa needs to be seen as the continuation of the colonial project: it needs to be understood as being based on institutionalized white supremacy, and that it needs to be understood as having underwritten the race regime through heterosexuality (Gunkel, 2010:28). This view illustrates how heterosexuality has been policed through race in South Africa. The way in which heterosexuality, as a sexuality, has had to be policed provides evidence for how unstable heterosexuality actually is (Gunkel. 2010:28). Homosexuality threatens to undermine male power, presents a challenge to masculine power within African sexual relations and ultimately disrupts the heterosexist social order (Tamale, 2003:3).

### Conclusion

This chapter has provided a literary overview of the available knowledge on how masculinity is constructed in post-apartheid South Africa, and how homosexuality affects this construction. It has demonstrated how through peer pressure boys and men are encouraged to engage in practices that promote violence against women and other men. Moreover, the chapter has provided insight into how apartheid has contributed to the contemporary understanding and reproduction of masculinity amongst black men in South Africa, where dominance and subordination were based on white and black bodies.

As mentioned in this chapter, to fully understand how masculinities are constructed and maintained, it is imperative to understand how sexualities that are non-heteronormative affect men's understandings of themselves and of their world. Heteronormativity is an important factor in the reproduction of masculinities as it constructs a gender regime, which encourages male domination and female subordination. Homosexual individuals – black lesbians in particular – pose a threat to this gender hierarchy, and their bodies then become a site for men to prove their masculinity through the use of violence. Finally, this chapter has demonstrated how masculinities need to constantly be reproduced through the use of violence in order for men to prove their manhood.



## **Chapter Three: Theories of Rape**

### Introduction

Rape is often used out of context, as a metaphor, in many instances regarding the ruin of a city or environmental disaster (“The Rape of Kuwait”; “the rape of our planet” etc.). In these cases, it is often forgotten that the phenomenon is used as a specific tool that violates the being of another person who can almost never again feel at home in the world (Bourke, 2007:6). Rape is a conscious decision made on the part of a perpetrator. It is seen as sex to which perpetrators are entitled, where victims do not matter (Gqola, 2015:2).

The aim of this chapter is to provide insight into the causes of the high rates of sexual violence in South Africa. This will be done through the examination of the theories of rape established by Louise du Toit. These theories focus on the rape of heterosexual women but can provide meaningful insight into why lesbian women are raped.

### Rape in post-apartheid South African society

South Africa has the worst rape statistics for a society that is not at war or experiencing civil unrest (Moffett, 2006:129; Du Toit, 2014:101). And although these statistics – according to the South African Police Service (2016) – have allegedly improved, one in three women living in the country will be raped in her lifetime, while one in four women will experience physical abuse at the hands of her partner (Moffett, 2006:129). These statistics suggest that South Africa has been and is still experiencing a gendered civil war. This is coupled to the failure of the criminal justice and health systems to provide meaningful protection and care to women who have been affected by abuse. Furthermore, the statistics that are provided by police reports represent the broad category of sexual assault and do not denote specific types of sexual assault.

The available narratives of rape in South Africa suppress debates about the phenomenon, demonize black men and hinder educational efforts on the subject (Moffett, 2006:130). Postcolonial analyses of rape in South Africa demonstrate how women’s bodies and sexuality have become both politically and culturally commodified through the process of transformation from apartheid to democracy (Moffett, 2006:131). Sexual violence in the country is therefore argued to be fuelled by justification narratives that were rooted in the apartheid practices, which were utilized to provide legitimacy for the use of violence. In post-apartheid South Africa, gender hierarchies are maintained and women are regulated through the use of the most intimate form of violence: rape (Moffett, 2006). For the sake of this research, the definition of rape provided in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007 will be used. According to this definition, rape refers to the “unlawful and intentional act



of sexual penetration with a complainant ('B'), without the consent of B" (The Republic of South Africa, 2007:10).

Rape in post-apartheid South African society has become a "socially endorsed project" that aids the maintenance of the country's patriarchal order (Moffett, 2006:129). Rape is used by men to inscribe the status of the "other" onto women. Although this may be true of universal cases of rape, in South Africa these activities are drawn from apartheid practices of control that spread through all sections of society (Moffett, 2006:130). Gender-based violence in South Africa is described as having reached epidemic proportions as it also fuels the already existing HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Western aetiological models highlight the cause of why men rape as stemming from: anger, fear and the inadequacy of individual men; the monstrosity of patriarchy; or the anger over women's empowerment. These understandings may provide some uses in countries like South Africa, but it ultimately fails to deliver a nuanced explanatory framework for the experience of pervasive sexual violence in the country (Moffett, 2006:131). Western narratives of sexual violence therefore do not consider the internalization of violence by individuals in postcolonial countries with long histories of ethnic or racial conflict, which has been formed through the process of "othering". Gqola (2015: 5) illustrates this by stating that rape and race have historically intersected in mutually reinforcing ways. While it is widely recognized that political turmoil brings about an increase in incidences of sexual violence (Ratele, 2014:115), there is not much evidence that explains this correlation. Regardless of the limited data, it is argued that during periods of nationalist fervour, political regeneration and emancipation sexual violence against women and children rise at alarming rates – for reasons that have to do with the immediate past.

The hierarchies that were established and enforced during apartheid have continued to impact the lives of women and the experience of gender-based violence in South Africa. The first ten years of democracy witnessed a dramatic increase in sexual assaults on women, children and even men (Moffett, 2006:132). To understand this increase, one cannot look solely at education regarding human rights or at the transformation of the courts and the police force. Many rape survivors experience discrimination and secondary victimization; not only in their communities, but also at the hands of the courts and the police (Gqola, 2015:5; Moffett, 2006:132; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002:149). Thus, rape remains hugely under-reported. As a result, sexual violence statistics are distorted.

This discrimination feeds into the narrative that rape is supposed to manifest itself in a certain way, and provides reason as to why society believes some rape victims and refuses to believe others (Gqola, 2015:5). The act of rape feeds the idea that some individuals in society matter whilst others are disposable. A girl or woman's rape story becomes more or less believable depending on how much it resembles society's idea of what rape looks like, who rapes, who can be raped, when rape occurs, and how one can be raped (Gqola, 2015:29).

Therefore, whether or not a woman is believed to have been raped solely relies on what rape is believed to look like. If a girl or woman's rape story closely resembles what society deems to be rape, the more likely she is to be believed, whereas if her rape story does not resemble this preconceived idea of rape she will most likely not be believed (Gqola, 2015:29). Corrective rape does not fit into this image of rape and is consequently not regarded as rape by perpetrators, as well as those who oppose homosexuality. Black lesbian women are not seen as proper African women, as possible victims of rape.

Myths about rape add to the idea of what is considered rape and what is not. Rape myths have the power to determine both sexual attitudes and sexual behaviours in social settings (Ryan, 2011:774). These rape myths further influence the formation of sexual scripts, which are culturally determined patterns of behaviour that impact sexual desire and behaviour. These include the ideas of women drinking too much, wearing revealing clothing and men always being ready for sex (Ryan, 2011:774). Rape myths and sexual scripts work together in various ways to support the perpetuation of rape. They are also representative of attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely held. These attitudes and beliefs both deny and justify the perpetration of sexual aggression by men against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994:134).

These myths are further able to create an environment in which rape is continuously perpetrated, and where victims – rather than perpetrators – are blamed for being raped. There are four main rape myths that have been established in patriarchal societies, which represent how contemporary beliefs about rape contribute to beliefs about the act being acceptable. Examples of these include the beliefs: that husbands cannot rape their wives, that women enjoy rape, that women ask to be raped and that women lie about being raped (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011:761).

### Theorising rape

The understanding of rape has shifted over time and in various societies. Legal definitions of the phenomenon have been restructured to adapt with changing societies. According to the World Health Organization's 2002 World Report on Violence, sexual violence refers to "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work" (Krug *et al.*, 2002:149). It is also noted that sexual violence tends to occur in societies where rigid and traditional gender roles are maintained, and where there is a strong idea of male superiority, which highlights male dominance, physical strength and honour (Krug *et al.*, 2002:149). Male entitlement contributes to the prevalence of sexual violence, as societies that assent to the concepts of male honour and entitlement could ultimately deny women the fundamental right to refuse sex.

Narratives of rape in South Africa demonstrate how demands for gender equality in the country are undermined. These narratives are indicative of how demands for justice in relation to rape are silenced by accusations of racism, and there is backlash by sectors in society that resist holding men responsible for rape (Moffett, 2006:132). One such example is presented by both Gqola (2015:4) and Moffett (2006:133); it describes how Charlene Smith – an anti-rape campaigner and herself a victim of rape – was attacked in a public argument by former president Thabo Mbeki and accused of being a racist for pointing out that South Africa had the worst statistics for sexual violence in the world. While Charlene Smith was correct in pointing out the prevalence of sexual violence in the country, former president Mbeki had also provided a meaningful insight into the automatic assumption of the public's correlation between black men and rape (Gqola, 2015:4). It is incorrect to assume that one racial group are the sole perpetrators of rape.

### Understanding rape in South Africa

The backlash against the narratives of rape in South Africa demonstrates how the high levels of sexual violence in the country remains a complex social issue that is still largely poorly understood (Du Toit, 2014:101). Many of the theories surrounding sexual violence have been conceptualized in the developed world (Sigsworth, 2009:4). Louise du Toit (2014) has created four theoretical frameworks that can be applied to the South African case in order to make sense of the high statistics of sexual violence.

Past-perpetrator trauma

The first framework created by Du Toit (2014) focuses on past-perpetrator trauma. It is perhaps one of the most frequently used theories within academia, the media, as well as popular discourse (Du Toit, 2014:102). This framework emerged as a response to the consistently high rape statistics in South Africa after the transition to democracy in 1994. It also represents the common trivialization of the occurrence of rape, which assumes that rape does not take place on a large scale. Moreover, it denies that: many men are involved, that rape poses a threat to democracy and the traumatic effects that rape has on victims. It also naturalizes rapist behaviour in men; furthermore, it puts the blame on the victims of rape for the occurrence of the act (Du Toit, 2014:102). This approach to rape locates the problem in the victims rather than perpetrators. It further denaturalizes the phenomenon and offers nothing more than a subjective explanation of the incidence.

Discourses that focus on crises of masculinities take this approach to explain the persistence of rape in South Africa (Du Toit, 2014:103; Moffett, 2006:136). When this approach is taken, colonial oppression or liberation struggles are focused on to explain the damage to the psyche of the colonized man to the point of symbolic castration (Du Toit, 2014:103). The lingering effects of the psychological damage allow for the assumption that men assert and perform their masculinity through sexual violence in the attempt to heal their damaged selves from the ills of colonialism (Du Toit, 2014:103; Hamber, 2007:385).

This explanation is also otherwise employed as a way to explain the effects of colonialism on the psychological well-being, a sort of post-traumatic stress disorder, amongst colonized men. Frantz Fanon (1952) explains this by stating that the rebellion of the colonized people will almost always take an erotic form. This is not suggested because the colonized are hypersexual (and have been presented as hypersexual beings), but because of the white sexual obsession that had been infused in the colonial project from the beginning. Therefore, black bodies within the colonial project become symbols of the sexual instinct for white bodies because of the conditioning of Negrophobia amongst white colonial sexuality (Fanon, 1952).

Although this framework remains popular in the discourse surrounding sexual violence in South Africa, there are a few complications present. Firstly, this framework encounters multiple problems when available facts and statistics are examined. Du Toit (2014:104) further suggests that if the main causes of rape were in fact locatable in a past bounded to colonialism, which produced damaged masculinities in the contemporary world, then twenty four years after

the formation of a democracy in South Africa there should be a positive effect on the trend surrounding rape (Moffett, 2006:131). It would be assumed that if the phenomenon of rape was positively affected, then the demilitarization of the South African man and the damages that colonialism had to him would gradually decline to a point where this view is no longer relevant (Du Toit, 2014:104).

The past-perpetrator trauma framework has the tendency of “othering” rapists and distancing them from mainstream society. The framework assumes that rapists are more likely to be black men from historically oppressed groups of people. This categorization of rapists allows for white perpetrators to evade scrutiny while it disproportionately blames veterans of the liberation struggle (Du Toit, 2014:104). The tendency of this framework to racialize the phenomenon of rape allows for “hijacking” by political agendas that completely ignore the magnitude of sexual violence in South Africa. The colonial injury discourse further excludes accounts of the psychosexual damage on the side of colonized women. An example of a woman who suffered at the hands of colonialism is Saartjie Baartman. The case of Saartjie Baartman illustrates how colonized women were deeply injured in their whole beings, including their sense of sexual self (Thomas, 2007:89). It is further noted that men and women did not experience colonialism in the same manner, and therefore the effects on men and women differ; this serves as a basis for explaining how and why men’s emasculation during the colonial period translates into sexual violence (Du Toit, 2014:105).

Most incidents of sexual violence have an intracommunal profile (Orkin, 2000:12). This suggests that those men who perpetrate rape in South Africa aim their sexual violence against women and girls who are closest to them: women who would have experienced the same oppression and colonial self-alienation as them. (Also implied by this is that ideas that the black man poses a threat to the white woman are justifications for racism.) This framework ultimately creates sympathy for men who engage in sexual violence – despite the othering of these men – by focusing on how the motivations and drives for sexual violence are anchored in the trauma of the past and the recovery of his nation. In contrast to the portrayal of the perpetrator, the victim remains completely anonymous, private and ahistorical (Du Toit, 2014:106).

The traumatic experiences of the victim are erased by this interpretation. It presents a danger of simply reducing the meaning of rape to the presumed cause in the mind of the perpetrator, erasing of the victim altogether and contributing to a culture of victim-blaming. It further reinforces the idea that rape should be understood as a consequence of psychological pain and

injury of the perpetrator (Du Toit, 2014:106). Framing the violence of rape in this manner depersonalizes the perpetrator and further underplays the human and moral agency and accountability of the rapist. This fosters the tendency of blaming the victim and excusing the perpetrator, while creating an environment that naturalizes male sexual violence under the aspects of psychological illness (Du Toit, 2014:107).

Because sexual violence appears to be something inherent to men who have been subjected to colonialism, this framework suggests that no amount of policing will assist in the reduction of sexual violence given that the behaviour of men is purely a symptom of unstable psyches; something which can largely only be addressed through mass programmes of therapy (Du Toit, 2014:107). Furthermore, classifying rape as an unintelligible act diminishes the accountability of men. Placing emphasis on the psychological aspects of a rapists' behaviour creates sympathy.

#### Current socioeconomic exclusion

The second framework focuses on the socio-economic issues around men in South Africa. It adopts a few aspects of the first framework, but simultaneously offers a better understanding as it accounts for the high – and possibly increasing – numbers of sexual violence in the country. This framework locates the causes of injured masculinity not in historical factors, but in the postcolonial dynamics of socio-economic exclusion. It seeks a class/underclass explanation for the prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa (Du Toit, 2014:108).

This framework has led theorists to look to the incompleteness of the transition from apartheid to democracy as the probable cause of sexual violence in South Africa. The violence experienced, not solely sexual violence, is a further demonstration of the injustices of the past. An example provided by Cooper and Foster (2008:10) is that of poor young boys from the Cape Flats who utilize and invest in a hypermasculine discourse in order to assist them in the alleviating feelings of inadequacy, social anxieties and the disempowerment they feel in their everyday lives.

This framework however, much like the one that precedes it, leaves many unanswered questions. To view violence as an effect of poverty does not explain why men turn to *sexual* violence. Nor does it provide an answer regarding the asymmetry between the sexes when it comes to violence: why do men living in poverty in South Africa resort to sexual violence, but women living under the same circumstances do not? This framework is therefore also incomplete and incapable of explaining the high rates of sexual violence in South Africa.

In order to provide a greater understanding of socio-economic conditions in a post-apartheid South Africa, and its relationship to sexual violence, the framework needs to include an analysis between the sexes within impoverished communities after the transition to democracy in 1994. According to Du Toit (2014:108), this is imperative to fully comprehend the links between masculinity issues and frustrations of poverty, and in order to better account for the gendered activity of violence. Multiple theorists have suggested that to understand this, there needs to be link between issues regarding masculinity and the frustrations of poverty (Hamber, 2007; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009).

One perspective of the gendered nature of violence is that violent disempowered poor men assert a fragile masculinity, as their masculinity becomes threatened when they fail to meet the social expectations of manhood due to the circumstances of poverty (Hamber, 2007:383). This suggests that fragile masculinities need to be understood as functions of gendered dynamics within specific communities. Fragile masculinities may then lead to the perpetration of sexual violence because men can no longer support women and children economically nor through patriarchy the way in which previous generations were able (Du Toit, 2014:109). The perpetration of sexual violence amongst poor men can then be linked to the increased marginalization of men in the broader global South, in both the formal and informal economies. According to Du Plessis (2007:10), this diminishes a man's strategic indispensability in his community, and it further leads to the resistance to women's increased independence. A man's perceived sense of loss of control can therefore be seen as a trigger to deliberately impact the status of women through violence.

This framework provides a simplistic understanding where sexual violence inevitably flows from the circumstances of poverty. Theorists demonstrate that poverty alone cannot explain the gendered and intracommunal nature of sexual violence in South Africa. The framework can, however, expand the understanding of sexual violence if it includes insights into issues of masculine dominance (Du Toit, 2014:109). Biologically speaking, there exists asymmetry between the sexes when it comes to violence. Pinker (2011) notes that violence is, for the sake of evolution, a predominantly male pastime. This asymmetry occurs because men are preoccupied with gaining sexual access to women, while simultaneously warding off other men who are seen as competition; women are far more concerned with raising children (Pinker, 2011:623).



The main form of violence that men are engaged in, according to Pinker (2011:621), is that of intrasexual male competition and of dominance displays amongst one another. This demonstrates a man's capacity and eagerness to engage in acts of violence. Hence, it can be seen as one of the leading factors driving sexual violence in South Africa. Rape creates a theatre in which a man's capacity for violence can be displayed for the benefit of oneself (Bourgois, 1996:255). Cooper and Foster (2008:10) also suggest that sexual violence committed in the Cape Flats is an aspect of the hypermasculine pose that is adopted by young men living in poverty-stricken communities.

Rape in this framework is presented as a poor man's preoccupation with status and control. Du Toit (2014:110) poses the question of why this obsession with status and control is perverted into sexual violence in circumstances of poverty. The framework suggests that patterns of poverty and exclusion limit the options of both boys and men to obtain status in their communities, and so sexual violence then becomes a way of measuring masculinity within a group of men (Bourgois, 1996:255). It is also suggested that it is the extent to which poor women are empowered that has led to poor men becoming increasingly sexually violent.

The poverty discourse can only account for sexual violence in South Africa if it is coupled with gender politics within poor communities (Du Toit, 2014:110). The framework as it stands insinuates that an already marginalized population of the country is to blame for the prevalence of sexual violence, and in this assumption rests a racialized prejudice about the perpetrators of the phenomenon. The act of rape is therefore reserved for the non-white part of the population, which is worse off economically and socially. Although this is the underlying assumption of the framework, it is important to recognize that rape and misogyny are not confined to marginalized, poor and unemployed men in South Africa – although it may be convenient to distance the phenomenon of rape in terms of class (Du Toit, 2014:111).

Education plays an important role amongst men who have previously raped. Those who have committed the act are less likely to have a tertiary education and have earnings of over R500 a month, but are not within the top income bracket (Du Toit, 2014:111; Moffett, 2006:131). The correlation between sexual violence and social exclusion is more tenuous than one is led to believe by this narrative. The prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa cannot simply be based on the assumption of race and class. This framework is also then contradicted by empirical evidence (Du Toit, 2014:111).



Furthermore, the misogynistic attitudes of the political elites in South Africa have also demonstrated that this framework excuses the phenomenon of rape and the perpetration of sexual violence in terms of race and class, and it hides the fact that the South African society is complicit with the behaviours of rapists (Du Toit, 2014:112). This complicity is evident in the police service, the criminal justice system, the education system and the legal system – as was evident by former president Zuma’s 2006 rape trial. Zuma defended his behaviour on the grounds of the Zulu culture where it is held that a man could be accused of rape for leaving a woman sexually aroused (Ratele, 2006:50). During his rape trial he further stated that his accuser’s decision to wear a kanga (a traditional African wrap) were indications of her desire to pursue sexual intercourse with him (Du Toit, 2014:112).

Women who are raped by powerful and successful men are often not believed because men who are seen as heroes are presumed to have access to a number of women sexual partners. This is evident in the Zuma rape trial, but also with former South African cricketer Makhaya Ntini (Gqola, 2015:33). Women’s stories in cases like these are often not believed for two reasons: The first is that there is a belief that, especially in the case of black men, women accusing a man of rape have been sent in order to break down the status of a powerful black man. The second reason behind the implausibility of these victims’ stories is that women are supposed to find powerful men irresistible (Gqola, 2015:33). Women are therefore seen as sexual bodies that are supposed to be available to men, and men who are more affluent have more capacity to attract women. These men are consequently unable to rape, as white men were under apartheid, because there is no need for them to force anyone to engage in sexual acts with them.

#### Patriarchal politics

The third framework focuses on the political dimension to sexual violence. It focuses on gender politics and the realization of women’s rights in the new South Africa. The international community has made considerable progress in recognizing the power–political function and effect that rape holds, particularly in situations of conflict. Rape in this instance is seen as a weapon, an instrument of terror (Du Toit, 2014:112). In order to address how these international reflections can assist in the understanding of sexual violence in South Africa, there needs to be an understanding of the intracommunal nature of rape and the ongoing power struggle between the sexes (Du Toit, 2014:112).

The gendered civil war needs to be acknowledged (Moffett, 2006:129). This war can be traced back to the democratic dispensation in South Africa, if one assumes that colonialism and

pre-colonial socialization was characterized by peaceful gender relations. The prevalence of patriarchal sentiments plays an instrumental role in sexual violence. According to Hamber (2007:384), men feel threatened by the survival of women, and they therefore attempt to reassert their manhood in spaces where they are able to – usually through their intimate relationships with women. Hamber (2007:384) shows how men search for new weaknesses in women given that economic reliance on men is no longer relevant. Men turn to women's sexual weaknesses; where they cannot overpower a man who is physically stronger than them. Rape becomes a way for men to demonstrate and reassert their dominance (Hamber, 2007:384). Many men also feel weakened because women are more confident in who they are. This confidence is perceived as strength by men, and it in turn evokes feelings of weakness because they are deprived of power relative to women in their communities. Men in South Africa have created a pervasive delusion that the transition to democracy has favored women and that they have lost out in terms of education and employment (Du Toit, 2014:113).

In this framework, the assumptions of the socio-economic exclusion framework are present. Men are understood as experiencing a loss or a crisis of masculinity due to the new democratic dispensation. This framework then sees the prevalence of sexual violence not as the product of too little democracy, rather as the product of much democracy (Du Toit, 2014:114). Because of this backlash against women empowerment, the temptation may rise to curb women's rights in an effort to soothe the injured male psyche, which is at the core of sexual violence in South Africa.

As mentioned previously, Moffett (2006) links sexual violence in the country to the system of apartheid. To demonstrate this point, she refers to a television interview where a taxi driver is being interviewed about gang rape. The taxi driver states that him and his friends drive around over weekends looking for specific targets. The women who were targeted for gang rape were those who were "asking for it", the ones who were "cheeky", those women who "walk around like they own the place, and look you in the eye" (Moffett, 2006:138). This account demonstrates that sexual violence is calculated and strategic, rather than simply being a product of psychological illness and trauma (Du Toit, 2014:114). The same rhetoric was used to justify white-on-black violence during the apartheid era in South Africa, and the preceding three centuries of colonialism, to show black people their place in society (Moffett, 2006:138). Sexual violence is then used in the same way as racism was used: to ensure that people of a perceived subordinate class were kept in their place, despite this subclass recognizing that this classification is false. Rape is therefore a socially endorsed tool for men to maintain the

patriarchal order and for women to maintain their status as the “other” (Du Toit, 2014:115; Moffett, 2006:129).

This framework improves on both the first and second frames as it accounts for the high rape statistics in the country by framing the prevalence of sexual violence as a backlash against democratization, particularly when democratic values affect women (Du Toit, 2014:115). If sexual violence is understood in this way, rape has a political function in post-apartheid South Africa: it is meant to either prevent or reverse the threat of gender equality in society.

Furthermore, the patriarchal politics framework does not hold one population group, formerly oppressed black men, responsible for rape in South Africa (Du Toit, 2014:115). The previous frameworks inherently assume that sexual violence remains a black problem, rather than assuming that there are high rates of sexual violence across all racial groups in the country. If it can be assumed that sexual aggression is not an expression of past psychological illness or social exclusion but rather an assertion of control in the name of patriarchy, then perpetrators of rape may form a part of all social groups who feel that their patriarchy is being challenged by democracy and by the Constitution (Du Toit, 2014:115). If sexual violence is addressed in South Africa as a whole, and not only focused upon as a phenomenon that is explicit within one social community, it becomes easier to see the widespread complicity regarding rape.

When the focus on perpetrators of rape is shifted from a psychological perspective to a more political perspective, accountability is heightened. The use of psychological vocabulary does nothing more than hide the patriarchal domination that is exerted through acts of sexual violence; where sympathy is created for perpetrators and the focus on survivors/victims becomes lost (Du Toit, 2014:116). Creating sympathy for the perpetrator ignores the voluntary actions that are involved during rape. Sheets-Johnstone (1994:150) demonstrates this by stating that the involuntary nature of a male’s erection often gets confused with the voluntary act of rape. Sexual penetration is not an act that is out of a man’s control in the instance of rape. This framework best accommodates both the perspectives of the perpetrators and victims of rape.

Despite providing the most evidence regarding the experience of the victim, the framework does have a few shortcomings. It firstly fails to sufficiently account for the sexual form that violence takes by framing sexual violence as a tool of political oppression. With the prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa, there needs to be a framework that takes into account the difference between sexual violence and other forms of less invasive violence (Du Toit, 2014:117). In order for this to occur, there needs to be a focus on the full experience of victims

of rape as it provides insights into what exactly the act of rape is and what the perpetrator's intentions are.

The second shortcoming of this framework is that it hypothesizes that the two sexes are political enemies. This creates the assumption that there exists competition between men and women and that women pose a threat to men or other masculine groups (Pinker, 2011:525). This further suggests that women who strive for any kind of autonomy are already viewed as the political opponents of men in a pre-established political field. Rape serves as a function to instrumentalize women, which diminishes their power to claim political and human status in society (Du Toit, 2014:117). The framework assumes that the power struggle between men and women in South Africa is a zero-sum game, as it reinforces patriarchal notions of masculinity. If the gendered power struggle is viewed in this way, any victory for women's rights is seen as both a material and a symbolic loss for men; every advancement for women is met by resistance by men (Du Toit, 2014:117). The advancement of women's sexuality is seen as another threat to men. Homosexuality in particular challenges this patriarchy and the patriarchal male's sense of entitlement (Vasant, 2015:127). Lesbian women essentially live a life devoid of dominant male figure. Where men have supported efforts to try "cure" these women of their homosexuality they have also stated that lesbian women make them feel as if they are not good enough (Vasant, 2015:127). A life not dependent on men is projected through lesbian women. This challenges the heteronormative and orthodox African outlook on life and results in feelings of disempowerment and irrelevance.

#### Ontological violence

This final framework focuses on distinguishing invasive forms of violence, rape and torture, from other forms of violence. The violence associated with rape is seen as regenerative violence that holds the capacity to reinscribe patriarchal identities where these identities are threatened. This crisis of masculinity that demands violence is exactly what is perceived to be the transition to democratic modernity (Praeg & Baillie, 2011:258). This framework illustrates that rape possesses both a sacrificial and a restorative power, which allows one to understand what the rapist gains (Du Toit, 2014:118). Pinker's (2011:525) idea that men may hold exploitative attitudes to women, but the combative attitudes are reserved for other men falls in line with the argument that Praeg and Baillie (2011) pursue. It states that rape is more about male contests of dominance, which grants men the opportunity to perform their masculinity, than about instances of instrumental violence. Sexual dominance, which is expressed through acts of sexual aggression, is then indicative of a man's masculine status (Du Toit, 2014:118).

Baaz and Stern (2009) demonstrate how sexual violence in the armed forces is precisely a way in which male soldiers are able to regain their masculinity and assert their power over a woman victim. These soldiers use rape as a performative act of masculinity, where the “abnormal” becomes “normal” in a military setting (Baaz & Stern, 2009:510). Soldiers further differentiate between “normal” and “evil” rape. Where normal rape was seen as a way for the men to release their sexual tension, evil rape was described as deriving from a sense of moral disengagement (Baaz & Stern, 2009:510) that accompanied the conditions of war. In these instances, what is generally considered as inconceivable becomes normalized. Soldiers in the Congo do not receive adequate salaries and living conditions are harsh. Because of this, they are perceived to be denied the right to a woman in a normal way. Although the soldiers recognize that the women who are targets of their sexual violence possess rights, rape is defended because a man has a right to sex (Baaz & Stern, 2009:513). Evil rapes were further characterized as resulting from hunger, poverty, neglect and the absurdness of war. The soldiers described rape as a result of total emasculation. Although the soldiers recognized that rape was morally wrong, in the setting of war everything that had been condemned in civilian life had been normalized – including gang rape. The act of gang rape further dehumanizes the female figure whilst simultaneously strengthening the male bond that is rooted in misogyny. In this instance, rape becomes a theatre where a woman’s body is seen as the stage (Du Toit, 2014:118).

Like any other identity, masculinity is unstable and it is therefore in constant need of affirmation (Praeg & Baillie, 2011:260). It may consequently be necessary to argue that a crisis of masculinity is not the main cause for the prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa and that rape is a product of a convergence of factors that channel displays of male dominance, which require violent actions. Rape then cannot be blamed on women’s rights, colonialism, poverty, nor the dismantling of patriarchy but rather on broader South Africa’s complacency, alongside an ineffective police service (Du Toit, 2014:118). Moreover, the SAPS does not distinguish between what could be considered “normal” sexual violence and sexual violence as a hate crime against lesbian women; despite the Equality Act of 2000, which outlines hate crimes (Vasant, 2015:129). Pinker (2011:520) notes that violence is directly linked to the self-esteem of the perpetrator, and too much self-esteem produces violent individuals – especially in instances where it is unearned.

Sexual violence in South Africa tempts men for a plethora of reasons. Because of low rates of reporting rape, it presents itself as relatively risk free; as mentioned previously, one in three women in South Africa will be raped in their lifetime (Moffett, 2006:130). Yet, statistics

provided by the South African Police Service of reported rapes do not reflect these numbers – as out of twenty-five rapists, twenty-four walk free (ActionAid, 2009:5). Furthermore, victims are the ones who are blamed and shamed for rape, rather than the perpetrators. Social service staff do not take the crime of rape seriously, and police work that deals with cases of rape is sloppy to the point where very few convictions are made (Du Toit, 2014:119). Perpetrators of sexual violence calculate and minimize their risks by targeting younger women and girls who are considered powerless. In these instances, rape victims are not political enemies. Although these women and girls are seen as easy targets, rape is still an illegal act and presents some risk for the male perpetrator, and it is therefore viewed as an adequate arena for dominance displays (Du Toit, 2014:119).

According to Pinker (2011:688), younger South African men see issues of intrasex dominance as something important. This is mainly due to the marginalization of younger men in South Africa, which is caused by: the breakdown of marriage as an institution and therefore stable family life, the reduced chance for men to invest in their children, and polygamous marriage practices that leads to a distorted distribution of wives – with older men having more women, whilst younger men have none (Pinker, 2011:688). Furthermore, the population pyramid in South Africa has a thick base of young people, which contributes to the problem of violence in the country, as too many young men are more likely to be deprived of status and access to women. Pinker (2011:688) also suggests that these demographics depict how women are not in control of their fertility. If women were to be in control over their own reproductive capacity, violence could be reduced in the most dangerous parts of the world (Pinker, 2011:688). Rather than looking at women's rights as the problem of sexual violence, it becomes clear that the perpetuation of patriarchal cultures at the expense of women has become the main reason for the crisis in South Africa.

Although this framework elaborates on the temptation of rape from the perpetrator's perspective, it is important to remember to account for the victim's perspective. The perpetration of rape seeks to fully destroy the victim's sexual and personal integrity (Du Toit, 2014:120). When reading into the experiences of rape victims, commonly expressed themes include: the victim's loss of voice, the loss of a world that is intact, the loss of faith in oneself and self-betrayal – coupled with a loss of reliable bonds with others. This extreme form of intimate violence demonstrates a higher ambition against women rather than simple political domination (Du Toit, 2014:120).

This framework provides the best account for the high levels of sexual violence that South Africa experiences. It holds men accountable for the perpetuation of rape while simultaneously explaining the violent nature of rape. Sexual violence in the country may decrease if South Africa is thoroughly feminized, and not the opposite. Improving the status of women will benefit the whole instead of pitting women against men, as has been suggested (Du Toit, 2014:121).

Ultimately, one of the most significant ways of proving one's manhood is to demonstrate acts of aggression. Rape is considered an intimate form of violence and is used to crush female subjectivity as well as political and sexual agency by denying the subject status of women (Kelland, 2012:167). Rape ultimately mirrors the symbolic order of patriarchy and aims to destroy a woman's sense of embodiment and selfhood – whether it is in a heterosexual context or seen as aiding in the “curing” of a deviant homosexual female. Rape of lesbian women – particularly, but not limited to, black lesbian women – is seen as a social service, as men believe to be teaching these women a lesson in how to be a real woman in a patriarchal society (Vasant, 2015:126).

### Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated – using the theoretical frameworks of Louise du Toit – that understanding rape as a product of negative psychological effects of the colonial project is insufficient. It has established that to fully understand rape in post-apartheid South Africa, sexual violence needs to be differentiated from other forms of violence. Once this is done, it becomes clear that rape acts as a regenerative tool, which allows men to display their masculine identity over and over. Ultimately, what can be understood about the theories of rape in this chapter is that in South Africa sexual violence is widespread because of the public's complacency in supporting the production and reproduction of violent masculine identities that men aim to achieve. This chapter, although not explicitly providing reasons for why black lesbian women are raped, has assisted in the understanding of corrective rape in South Africa.



## **Chapter Four: Situating Black Lesbian Bodies in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

### Introduction

This chapter seeks to identify the various reasons for sexual violence against black lesbian women in South Africa post-1994. It will focus on answering the research questions, which have already been provided in Chapter One. By doing this, it will answer why black lesbian women are seen to threaten the identities of men, and how the masculine identity needs violence in order to survive. In answering the research questions, this chapter will demonstrate that black lesbian women transgress traditional gender norms, which are constructed through heterosexuality. These same gender norms encourage violent behaviour amongst men in order for them to reach the ideal type of masculinity.

### Black women and sexuality

Historically speaking, black women's sexuality has been presented as categories for scientific documentation. It has been used in media representation and pornography in order to develop a certain image when thinking about the black woman's body (Lewis, 2005:11). One of the most famous examples is that of Saartjie Baartman. Her example illustrates how black women have been debased throughout history through the gaze of white supremacy. In the present day, black women's bodies remain objectified and exploited in the way that Saartjie Baartman had been. Black women's bodies, and so their sexuality, have been made public and further complicates any attempt by black women to assert agency over their lives and over their bodies (Henderson, 2014:952). European explorers and colonists considered black women as sexually promiscuous, morally loose, grotesque, uncivilized and crude (Friedman & Valenti, 2008:78; Lake, 2014:70). The bodies of slaves belonged to those who had captured or had bought them. The ownership of a slave's body meant the ownership of its sexual and reproductive labour (Gqola, 2015:41).

During slavery, white men raped black women in order for them to produce offspring that could be sold. The deliberate violation of rape highlights how sexual control was practiced over black women by their white masters. Slavery brought about the perception that black women could not be raped because Africans were stereotyped as hypersexual – even as free women (Gqola, 2015:43).

At the end of slavery black women were no longer needed in this sense, and the perception of their bodies returned to its previous image. Black women were accused of sexual deviation and promiscuity (Friedman & Valenti, 2008:78). These stereotypes have been met with resistance



by black women, and they have resultantly tried to prove that they, as black women, can be considered good citizens by silencing their sexuality and sexual pleasure. Between these two extremes, black women found little space to determine who they are as sexual beings (Friedman & Valenti, 2008:79). Stereotypically, black women's sexuality has been defined in its relation to white maleness: where black women have either taken on the colonial roles of sexual manipulators, or the nationalist role of mothers; where they have embraced their sexuality or suppressed it in order to steer away from the hypersexual stereotype.

The essentialist discourses about the African body, which were constructed by the Western imperialists, have been adopted by postcolonial African nationalists in an uncritical manner as to reinforce the state as patriarchal. Given colonists' beliefs about the African body and sexuality, it was assumed that Africans could be nothing other than heterosexual (Lake, 2014:70). These assumptions have influenced how African sexuality – as well as homosexuality – is thought about in contemporary South Africa society. In considering the African woman's body, gender can be viewed as an additional form of othering when it comes to black women's bodies and sexuality. This is because the black lesbian body, according to Lake (2014:71), is seen to disrupt notions of what is considered “normal” when it comes to sexuality in South Africa.

McClintock (1991:104) states that all nationalisms are invented, gendered and dangerous as they create nations where nations had not previously existed. Nationalisms remain dangerous as they are enacted through social institutions and act as a tool to assist or hinder people's access to rights and resources of the nation-state (McClintock, 1991:105). Furthermore, male nationalist needs and aspirations have always been upheld through individualized performances. Women's needs have therefore been, throughout history, defined in relation to men, and citizenship only granted to women through their marriage to a man (McClintock, 1995:358). Citizenship determines the relationship between an individual, the state and society (Yuval-Davis, 1997:4).

It is further recognized that women's roles in the nationalist agenda takes on five forms (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). The first of these forms include women being represented as biological reproducers of the nation state; where a woman's main role is that of a biological mother to the nation. The second suggests that women are symbols of difference. The third form views women through the nationalist agenda, and it sees women as producers and reproducers of cultural narratives that are specific to a nation. This role suggests that women

not only have a biological role as reproducers, but can teach certain narratives to the children they raise (given women's primary role in nationalism as motherhood). The fourth form sees women as reproducers of the boundaries of the nation. This is done through the refusal to engage in sexual intercourse or to marry with men from different nations. Finally, women's role in nationalism can take the role of active participants; where they are involved in national movements through involvement in the army, congress and community organizations (McClintock, 1991:105; Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). Because of this understanding, women have had limited agency in terms of nationalism, where their roles are restricted. This has resulted in the category of women in South Africa – both white and black – being produced in a manner that relates to the nation (Hirsch, 2011:275). Women are then seen as the bearers of the nation and have come to represent notions of unity and stability (Samuelson, 2007:2).

Similarly, African nationalism placed women on the side lines of any political agency, despite the formation of the African National Congress's Bantu Women's League. The volunteer work of women was approved in the liberation struggle, but only if it served the primary needs of the black male population. A black women's identity had become auxiliary, and her role was reduced to that of a supporter<sup>5</sup> (McClintock, 1991:115). In spite of the longstanding support of women in the African National Congress, the women's primary role had rested on motherhood – much like that of the Afrikaner woman: where women were seen as mothers of the nation. The main difference between women, Afrikaner nationalism and African nationalism is that the role of motherhood in black communities takes on a more communal role than that of motherhood in white communities, as black motherhood extends beyond the biological aspect of being a mother. This is demonstrated in the ways that aunts, grandmothers and cousins have taken the role of mother for children (McClintock, 1991:117).

Black lesbian women directly subvert, according to how they are perceived in society, this preconceived nationalist, racist and patriarchal idea of women's bodies and their place in society. Black lesbian bodies are therefore seen as transgressive in a patriarchal society's ideas of nationalism where reproduction, motherhood and wifehood are seen as central to the role of an African woman in a post-1994 South Africa (Lake, 2014:71). Heteronormativity and patriarchy are still embedded in the South African nationalist identity, and because of this the (black) lesbian woman is not included in its construction. This shows how sexuality still

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<sup>5</sup> Only after the adoption of a new constitution after the Second World War had the African National Congress (ANC) given women full membership and voting rights. This occurred in 1943, exactly thirty one years after the ANC was formed (McClintock, 1991:115).

remains an important indicator in the creation of the nationalist discourse (Morrissey, 2013:76). The process of othering that was used under the apartheid government has weaved its way into the new democracy and has continued to influence the social, political and cultural landscapes, which has resulted in the marginalization of sexual orientations that deviate from heterosexuality, and the use of violence in policing bodies that are considered unnatural (Lake, 2014:74). The sorts of punitive attacks on black lesbian bodies are reminiscent of how people of colour under the apartheid government were punished for attempting to pass as white (Lake, 2014:79). Black lesbian women in their communities are perceived as wanting to be men, and so they are punished through various forms of harassment for their “transgressions”.

#### Black lesbianism and “corrective” rape

Gender-based violence against heterosexual women in South Africa has been particularly well researched, but the same violence against homosexual women has not been similarly acknowledged (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:237). The invisibility and vulnerability of lesbians living in South Africa can be attributed to the country’s patriarchal apartheid past where, as a collective group, they were seldom a focus of the state’s attention. The violence perpetrated against black lesbian women in South Africa is contrary to the country’s legal and political landscape, where the country forms part of various international treaties and holds a constitution that protects the rights of women and homosexuals (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:238). Furthermore, in South Africa, lesbians are twice more likely to be victims of violence than heterosexual women (Kotze & Bowman, 2017:2). Despite this statistic, it is important to note that hate crimes against the LGBT community increase or decrease at different intersections of class, race and gender. For example, white lesbian women who do not live in under-resourced areas are not subject to the same violence as black lesbian women who live in poor communities (ActionAid, 2009).

South Africa’s constitution states that no person within the country can be discriminated against on the basis of race, religious beliefs, gender and sexual orientation<sup>6</sup>. Although sexual orientation is recognized in the Constitution, homophobic attacks continue to be reported in the South African media (Lake, 2014:69). This demonstrates how freedoms concerning sexual orientation remain limited (Msibi, 2008:50). Homophobic violence remains on the rise for the entire LGBTQ community, and black lesbians remain a particularly marginalized minority in South African township communities where they are subjected to assault, victimization, rape

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<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of this study, these specific markers of equality are important.

and death on a daily basis (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:237). The message send through “corrective” or “curative” rape is that homosexuality is behaviour that was brought to the continent by Western colonialists, and it is therefore a sexuality that is unnatural to South African culture, and to the African continent (Morrissey, 2013:79).

The act of rape itself is an act of humiliation and of punishment, and corrective rape takes this one step further by adding another motive. Corrective rape refers to the rape perpetrated by straight men on lesbian women with the attempt to “correct” or “cure” them of homosexuality (Lake, 2014:70). This definition of the act is characterized by a heteronormative identifier that acts as the groundwork for beliefs and attitudes regarding homosexuality, specifically black lesbian identities, in South Africa. The violence against homosexual individuals in South Africa can largely be attributed to understandings of masculinity (Msibi, 2008:50). This is because men are believed to act a certain way. Homosexual men who do not act like “real” men are attacked, and homosexual women – in some communities – are attacked because they are perceived as wanting to be men. Corrective rape is further motivated by the idea that lesbian women are trying to be men, and heterosexual men therefore need to prove to lesbian women that they are women (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:243).

The colour of black lesbians’ skin has become of particular concern because of the rhetoric that homosexuality is not innate to Africans and to African culture. Morrissey (2013:80) notes that it is common for Africans to consider lesbianism as something “white”, something that comes from the violent oppressors of colonialism and those who enforced apartheid<sup>7</sup>. By linking lesbianism to whiteness, men who hold the view of homosexuality as un-African are immediately assigning black lesbians an identity that suggests they are aligning with white imperialists rather than owning their native black identity (Morrissey, 2013:81).

Consequences of corrective rape have left black lesbian women pregnant or infected with various sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:248). Corrective rape has proven to be one of the main ways in which black lesbian women contract HIV. Lesbian women have also expressed that during rape, perpetrators insult them by suggesting that they are only lesbian because they have never had a good man; that they are lesbian because they are diseased; or that lesbian women are perverts (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:241). This has resulted in lesbian women developing post-traumatic stress disorder, which is noted to lead to depression, suicide and substance abuse in the long-term. This post-traumatic stress disorder

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<sup>7</sup> This presents some irony because colonists had prohibited homosexuality.

results in black lesbians living in constant fear and can ultimately lead to them downplaying their sexual orientation or gender non-conformity because of the anxiety that accompanies being oneself in their communities (Nel & Judge, 2008:27). Corrective rape deepens the sense of shame that black lesbian women may already possess because of the rhetoric surrounding homosexuality in South Africa. Gqola (2015:38) speaks of how shame has also functioned as oppression given the way it helps to determine who is valued and who is made invisible. Shame has become a product of dehumanization, and systems that are based on violence and oppression often produce shame amongst those they aim to victimize and brutalize (Gqola, 2015:38).

The consequences of rape and sexual violence are both physical and emotional. A lesbian woman who identifies as more masculine than feminine and is raped not only has to deal with the trauma of the rape, but also has to find ways to cope with how it undermines her claims to masculinity. This further increases feelings of isolation that a lesbian woman living in urban townships may already possess. These feelings of isolation are compounded with the realities of admitting to being raped because of how weakness and the loss of power are associated with the phenomenon (Lock Swarr, 2012:981). Lesbian women in townships and other urban communities who have close relationships with straight women are in increased danger because of how these relationships enable intimacy and affirm their masculine expressions. Lesbian women are then perceived as both threatening to heterosexual men, but also as sexually unavailable to them – which often results in homophobic violence (Lock Swarr, 2012:962). Black lesbian women are violently attacked because of the threats they pose to heterosexuality, to traditional gender norms and to conservative notions of sex between men and women (Lock Swarr, 2012:963).

What perpetrators of corrective rape suggests is that teaching a lesbian woman how to have sex with a man will ultimately change her behaviour and preferences to fit traditional gender norms and roles (Lock Swarr, 2012:978). Nkabinde (2008:145) notes that, although some men might hold this perception of corrective rape, a lesbian woman is ultimately living a life that has nothing to do with men. Lesbianism has no relation to having sex with men, or not having sex with men. This is perhaps what threatens men (Nkabinde, 2008:145). As opposed to being dependent on men for a livelihood, women are now becoming more and more autonomous in the democratic South Africa.

A large majority of cases of corrective rape are unreported due to the various myths and stigma associated with homosexuality in certain South African communities. The emotional trauma of reliving the incident, the fear of being exposed as a homosexual to friends and family members, as well as the humiliation of further victimization by service providers in the country are a few of the reasons behind the non-reporting of the crime (Muholi, 2004:118). Victims also fear being exposed to the police, as officers are often described as not taking victims seriously and not understanding the severity of corrective rape (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:246). Secondary victimization by the police was also reported in a study undertaken by Wells and Polders (2006). This victimization can take the form of verbal or physical abuse, blackmail and victim-blaming (Wells & Polders, 2006:25). The perception that the police would be unsympathetic or that the police would not take them seriously is widespread. Black lesbian women's negative experiences with the police demonstrate how public officials, who are there to serve the community, can also be influenced by the belief that homosexuality is un-African, and they are therefore complicit in the acts of sexual violence against lesbian women (Wells & Polders, 2006:26).

Due to the under reporting of corrective rape, it is consequently impossible to quantify how many lesbian women have fallen victims to rape, and whether or not the act takes place in all black townships across South Africa (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:246). Reporting their attacks also increases the risk of families and communities discovering their sexual identities as most black lesbian women have not "come out" because they fear how they will be treated. Women who were subjected to corrective rape mentioned in an interview by Zanele Muholi (2004:118) that the shame and humiliation that comes with the re-victimization by state workers – who are constitutionally obliged to protect them – is not worth reporting acts of violence against them as lesbian women. This demonstrates how the South African state is intrinsically complicit in violence against homosexual bodies. Furthermore, South African society has assisted in the normalization of the use of hate speech against homosexuals.

This normalization is maintained through a discourse that renders homosexual behaviours as unacceptable within South African culture (Mbisi, 2008:52). Negative views regarding homosexuality have been expressed by public figures. Jon Qwelane, a journalist working for the *Sunday Sun* at the time, had in a 2008 article equated homosexuality with bestiality, and he attributed homosexuality to a degradation of values and traditions. He had further stated that the South African constitution needed to be rewritten to exclude the rights and freedoms of homosexuals (Mbisi, 2008:52). The long awaited court case against Qwelane – the former

journalist and ambassador to Uganda – resumed earlier this year regarding his hate speech against homosexuals in the 2008 article (Sekhoto, 2017). Qwelane had been found guilty of hate speech in accordance with the South African constitution and had been ordered to write a public apology letter to the LGBT community in the country (Naaido, 2017). Additionally, former president Jacob Zuma, before his election into office, commented that same-sex unions were a disgrace to the South African nation and a disgrace to God. He also said that if a gay man was to attempt to stand in front of him, he would “knock him out” (Msibi, 2008:52).

Deputy Minister of Higher Education Mduduzi Manana has also recently presented evidence of how homophobic sentiments and violence against women is normalized in South Africa. Manana had confessed to beating two women inside a nightclub in Johannesburg and has had no action taken against his behaviour by the South African government (eNCA, 2017). The incident occurred because Manana had been called gay by the women he had beaten, further representing the intolerance that individuals hold against the label of homosexuality. Manana’s actions are seen by some government officials, such as Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini, as not deserving of retribution because there are other government leaders who are “guilty of more serious crimes than him” (IOL, 2017). These are only a few examples of how homophobia and homophobic violence have become ingrained into South African society, despite the constitutional protection against the discrimination against homosexuals.

Men’s organizations that were formed at the dawn of democracy – such as the South African Association of Men and the South African Rapists’ Association (both formed in 1994) – have provided consistent backlash against the constitutional guarantees that protect women. The South African Association of Men stated that marital violence against men was as prominent as marital violence against women, and that laws protecting women in the new constitution were part of a broader feminist assault on men (Lock Swarr, 2012:973). Furthermore, members of the South African Rapists’ Association have mentioned that rape is used by the group to discipline women who behave like snobs. A member stated that “[these women] just do not want to talk to most people, they think they know better than most of us” (Goldblatt & Meintjies, 1997:14).

Women may be legislatively empowered in South Africa, but at ground level they do not feel safe in their communities and in their homes. Women who are truly empowered do not live in constant fear of rape, sexual harassment and other violent impositions into their personal spaces (Gqola, 2007:116). As a result of attacks on women, community discussions about women’s



clothing arose across the country. Former president Jacob Zuma, engaging in these talks, suggested a dialogue on dress codes rather than addressing the social problems that resulted in the attacks. Imposing dress codes on women further encourages the policing of the female body and looks past the problems of sexual assault and patriarchy (Lock Swarr, 2012:974). This feeds into myths about rape and sexual scripts. It further adds to the narrative that rape should look a certain way in order for the victim's story to be plausible (Gqola, 2015:30). One of the most damaging assumptions that drives corrective rape is that women inherently possess a sexual desire and need for men, and that this needs to be forced upon them.

#### Black lesbian women and the appropriation of masculinity

Lock Swarr (2012:967) demonstrates in her article how lesbians in urban townships portray their own masculinities. In similar ways to heterosexual men in the same setting, black lesbian women present their masculinities as a means to assert agency, to claim masculine privileges and to declare romantic desires (Lock Swarr, 2012:967). While these women may appear to be imitating the men in their communities, it is important to note that they are not simply copying the masculinities of men, but rather that they are creating their own versions of masculinity given they still identify themselves as women. The black lesbians' masculinities become critical to their identities, and this is often what puts them at risk of violence from men in their communities (Lock Swarr, 2012:967). The creation of a masculine identity by black lesbian women in South Africa is demonstrative of masculinity's fluidity and of how one is able to constantly redefine what it means to possess masculinity.

Kotze and Bowman (2017:2) state that hate crimes – such as the intentional violence against lesbian women – are closely aimed at the appearance and mannerisms of victims. While white lesbian women have described their “coming out” stories as being liberating and empowering, it is noteworthy that not all lesbian women share this experience – as identifying as a homosexual can conflict with other identities they hold relating to culture and/or religion (Kotze & Bowman, 2017:2,4). White lesbians (as a collective) therefore tend to feel much safer in their sexual orientation than black lesbian women (Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy, & Moletsane, 2010:14). Others have stated that their homosexuality is a part of their identity, whether or not they have explicitly “come out”. This is seen in their attire and their behaviour: “the way I act, the way I dress identifies me as a lesbian, and as a butch lesbian” (Lock Swarr, 2012:968).

In relationships black lesbian women who have identified themselves as butch often unknowingly demonstrate how they conform to ideas about gender performativity. These women see themselves as masculine, and often in their intimate relationships with straight



women embrace the position of a man – claiming that they hold the power. This demonstrates how butch lesbians are able to exploit conceptions of masculinities, which again illustrates how masculinity has to be constantly redefined (Lock Swarr, 2012:968). In these relationships black lesbian women have constantly reiterated that there needs to be one partner who is weaker than the other, similar to perceptions of heterosexual relationships. Butchness, in certain instances, means that expectations, responsibilities and privileges in relationships are reserved for the lesbian women in these relationships.

Furthermore, these women are tasked with the duty of financial obligations and are exempt from housework, laundry and cooking (Kheswa, 2005:216). Black lesbian women in these instances subvert the role of a woman as outlined by nationalist discourses. Although this is the general perception in these relationships, these roles remain fluid and may vary from relationship to relationship. Conflicts may also arise in these relationships because of these roles. Violence in lesbian relationships may be an indication of the articulation of violent masculinities (Lock Swarr, 2012:970). This is based on the notion that control over a partner is indicative of love. As previously mentioned, black lesbian women may enter into relationships with heterosexual women in their communities and symbolically take the place of a male individual. This further puts them at risk of violence as they are seen as being in competition with men for the affections of heterosexual women. Gay (1985) describes how same-sex relationships between lesbian women can take on a “mummy–baby” form, where older women introduce younger women into same-sex play. Furthermore, lesbian women often have erotic relationships within same-sex friendships. However, these women do not view these relationships as threats to a heterosexual woman’s marriage to a man (Currier & Migraine-George, 2017:135).

Butch lesbian identities complicates the concept of female masculinities in South Africa. Lesbian women who possess a female masculinity are those who, according to Halberstam (1998, xi), feel as if they are more masculine than feminine when they are able to truly be themselves. These masculinities are present in conjunction with race, sexuality, class, history and location (Lock Swarr, 2012:972). Lesbian women have often spoken about altering their bodies in order to hide any femininity. Others have also explained that this masculine distinctiveness that they identify with is often a phase. Black lesbian women’s masculinity needs to be understood in terms of butchness and masculine corporeality (Lock Swarr, 1992:972).

Lesbian bodies further disrupt the heteronormative claim that only male bodies can be associated with masculinities. Men in the documentary *Rape for Who I Am* (2006) stated that lesbian bodies were not able to be raped as they were seen as male bodies. This statement made by the men also implies that the female body is a prerequisite for rape<sup>8</sup> (Lock Swarr, 2012:981). Men further stated that lesbians would only be raped because of the curiosity of whether or not the body was female or male. The statements made in the documentary about black lesbian women conflate ideas about the women's sexual desire for women with the sexual desire of male bodies, and they further force the separation of gendered bodies and sexuality through acts of rape (Lock Swarr, 2012:981).

The experiences of black lesbians in urban townships in South Africa have illustrated how conceptions of gender are produced in the country (Lock Swarr, 2012:928). Black lesbian bodies are perceived to threaten the manhood – a conception that has been heightened and highly racialized in post-apartheid South Africa – of men living in the same communities as these women and further threatens their claims to masculinities (Lock Swarr, 2012:983). While lesbian women may possess the same ideas that heterosexual men do regarding gendered roles and responsibilities, proposing and violence, the commonalities of these identifications are heavily undermined by the attacks, harassments and rape of black lesbian bodies. These attacks on black lesbians in South Africa reflect the danger that their bodies pose to gender and sexuality norms, as well as the challenge they pose to the monolithic conception that masculinity can only be attributed to male sexed bodies. Ultimately, the black lesbian body indicates how conceptions of successful masculinities are in fact vulnerable and dependent on relations with women (Lock Swarr, 2012:983).

#### Policing homosexual bodies

The high rates gender-based violence against women is a result of the patriarchal structures that support South African society (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:253). Post-apartheid South Africa remains a heteronormative patriarchal society and because of this specific, sometimes even harmful, ideas about manhood remain deeply entrenched. The homophobic violence that has become a harsh reality in the lives of many individuals is based on the notion that men who are feminine betray the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, and that women who present themselves

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<sup>8</sup> This is mirrored in ideas about rape as inappropriate sex. Women who are seen as sexually deviant are seen as women who have insatiable appetites for sex and therefore cannot be raped, and are placed into an 'impossible-to-rape' category – along with prostitutes/sex workers (Gqola, 2015:31).

as masculine attempt to challenge the superiority of men. Gay men and lesbian women are therefore seen to challenge the “natural” social order (Msibi, 2008; Swarr, 2012; Wells, 2006).

Men from various backgrounds in the country perceive themselves to be superior to women, and they are taught from young ages that to be a man is to possess characteristics such as bravery, strength and courage. They are further taught that they need to demand respect in order to possess a successful masculinity (Jewkes *et al.*, 2009:1). South African women on the other hand are understood as being inferior to men and are often considered to be men’s possessions (Martin, Kelly, Turquet, & Ross, 2009). It is often when women contest these stereotypes of their gender roles that they are at risk of violence in heteronormative, patriarchal societies. Lesbian women in particular challenge the stereotype of how women should act, how women should dress and to who they should be attracted. This has contributed to heterosexual men believing that lesbian women pose a threat to their masculine dominance and to traditional gender roles to which women are supposed to adhere (Naidoo & Karels, 2012:253). The violence directed at black lesbian women showcases the intolerance of South Africa’s heteronormative, patriarchal society towards non-heteronormative sexual orientations. Black lesbian women are resultantly seen to step outside the boundaries of society, communities and what their families prescribe to them, and they are also perceived to challenge the roles of wives, mothers, sisters and daughters in the nationalist agenda (Lewis, 2008:107).

#### Gendered violence and the impossibility of masculinity

Kimmel (1994) attributes violent behaviour of men to the markers of manhood. Violence is used by men as a tool to assert their power and authority over women as well as other men (Msibi, 2008:50). Competition between men highlights how men attempt to assert their dominance over other men. Some masculinities in South Africa are related to the exaggerated fear towards what are deemed as sexual orientations that deviates from heterosexuality. The fear of being labelled as homosexual, along with the increasingly rights-based approach exemplified in the 1994 Constitution, can be used to describe and explain the use of violence against the LGBT people of South Africa (Msibi, 2008:51).

Francis and Msibi (2011) indicate that the dominant culture in South Africa is heteronormative. This culture is based on the assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal, natural and acceptable sexual orientation in society (Griffin, D’Errico, Harro & Schiff, 2007). Because of this heterosexual culture, societal and organizational institutions have been designed to honour certain privileges of members of the dominant group, individuals who identify as heterosexual,

and this comes at the expense of members of the subordinate group, individuals who identify as homosexual or individuals who are gender non-conforming (Francis & Msibi, 2011:159).

Stereotypes and prejudice regarding those who are seen as others develop from the way in which members of society are socialized. According to Harro (2000:15), because human beings are all born into a specific set of social identities, every individual has an outline of how they should behave according to these identities. As it is elsewhere in the world, young girls and boys in South Africa are taught to carry themselves in certain ways that coincide with their social and gender roles (Francis & Msibi, 2011:164). Male violence against women in South Africa, as well as in the rest of the world, can therefore be linked to heterosexual social identities. Heterosexuality is further implicated in the broader inequality that exists between men and women, and it provides a site for violence against women (Shefer, Strebel, & Foster, 2000:11). Moreover, heterosexuality encourages and reproduces male power, sexual coercion and sexual abuse. Violence against women in the African context is also used to maintain traditional notions of gender roles. Women in Mpumalanga reported in a study that men specifically use violence as a means to punish women who step out of their social and gender roles; gang rapes were reported as being a common form of control too (Conco, 1996:22). This can be linked back to the corrective rape of black lesbian women and how sexual violence is used as a form of punishment in an attempt to control how these women live their lives.

Drawing on research undertaken in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Eriksson Baaz & Stern (2013), it is evident that heterosexuality requires men to constantly prove themselves as masculine subjects. This culture of heterosexuality demands that men engage in a set of ritualized practices in order for them to assert their dominance over women in a patriarchal society (Fahlberg & Pepper, 2016:676). Sexual violence remains one of the simplest ways for men to prove their manhood as it can be used as a method of intimidation and humiliation for women who do not uphold the values of heterosexuality and traditional gender norms. Black lesbian women are targets of violence because of their deviance from heterosexuality and traditional gender norms.

The ideal type of masculinity that boys and men are taught through this culture celebrates violent behaviour and dominance over women, as well as other men who do not conform to this masculinity (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:20). Although the study pursued by the authors was undertaken in the context of war, it can be applied to the case of South Africa given that

the country exhibits the highest rates of sexual violence for a country that is not at war (Du Toit, 2014:101). These statistics can be viewed as indicative of a gendered civil war.

Focusing on sexual violence in South Africa as a gendered story provides a better understanding of how masculinities are socially produced, rather than fixating on biological or sexed differences between men and women. The sexed body refers to the biological aspects of a human body, whereas gender refers to the cultural meaning and identity that the body acquires throughout life (Butler, 1986:35). If the focus is shifted from the biological aspects of male and female anatomy to cultural potentials of the body, attention can be drawn to how gender has worked to both underwrite and produce acts of sexual violence against women (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:22). If understood in this manner, men do not act in certain ways because they are male sexed bodies, they do so because of the masculinities that they are taught in their cultural settings. The problem with acts of violence – including sexual violence – is that men are encouraged to strive for masculinities that honour violence and subordinate women. The struggle to attain these masculinities proves to be continual processes, which never fully materialize and the violence is never-ending. Masculinities that are dependent on the production of violence is therefore an ongoing process.

Gender and the construction of masculinity, and femininity, is an accessory to the body and can change over time with the influence of culture. Men who perpetrate sexual violence do so because gendered acts are a result of a man's attempt to achieve an idealized form of masculinity (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:22). The sex–gender paradox, however, demonstrates that the construction of gender cannot work without the sexed body. By engaging in the process of choosing a gender identity, individuals – both men and women – are situating themselves in the field of cultural possibilities. To be either a man or woman is to be involved in the ongoing process of interpreting and appropriating cultural capabilities (Butler, 1986:36). Gender provides a means for individuals to construct themselves, rather than relying on biological, sexed distinctions to determine their identity. This is what allows some black lesbian women in South Africa to create their own masculinities while still identifying themselves as women. Black lesbian women construct their own masculinity in order to make sense of their world and their identities.

Sexual violence, although viewed as a product of the making of violent masculinities, is also implicated in constructions of gender norms. This is because violent masculinities can be seen as products of environments and culture. Due to this, men are produced as rapists in South

Africa because of the way masculinity is constructed in the country. Many men who engage in sexual violence against women are simply responding to the ideal type of masculinity that is constructed in South Africa, which encourages men to be violent and sexual, and are attempting to adhere to the gender norms that have been culturally established. This view contributes to the construction of rape myths that allows men to be excused from the perpetration of rape. Men who perform these acts of violence are seen as men rather than criminals because perpetrators of corrective rape do not view it as a crime. Therefore, sexual violence – in the form of corrective rape – against black lesbian women is a performative act in order to follow the established idea that successful manhood is synonymous with violence.

Rape is used because of the constructions of gender, and it is effective precisely because the act of rape is gendered. Men are not only raping the female sexed body, but also attacking the gendered enemy (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:27). Furthermore, rape in South Africa is normalized because of the constructions of masculinity and femininity. Although men are primarily the perpetrators of sexual violence in South Africa, the focus should not be on the biological factors of a male sexed body, but rather on men's ability to successfully adhere to the requirements of a problematic violent masculinity that they are taught. To alter these gendered reproductions of masculinity and femininity, Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013:28) suggest that gender is constructed in a different manner. In order for this to succeed, men should be taught masculinities that do not highlight violence as a way of proving manhood from an early age. Reproducing masculinities in a way that does not focus on violence could lead to the decrease in acts of sexual violence in South Africa, and in the rest of the world.

Although sexual violence against women demonstrates how men exhibit violence in order to prove their masculinity, men need to resort to sexual violence because a successful masculinity is simply unattainable. Violence against women can therefore be seen as normalized given the accompanying realization of a masculine identity. Rape serves as a performative act that allows some men to reconstitute their masculine identities, while at the same time demonstrating how it is impossible to do so (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:28). Men continuously need to compete with other men through various violent practices that are considered to be masculine, in order to attain a successful gender identity in a heteronormative patriarchal society. The success of this relies on the continual re-enactment of violence against women and other men (Butler, 1990).

The impossibility of gender is cast onto both those who rape and those who are raped. Where men are trapped in “abnormal” conditions of poverty, they may seek to alleviate their position through enacting intimate forms of violence that allow them to attain their desired form of masculinity, while simultaneously demonstrating that this desired form is not attainable in their setting. Black lesbian women are therefore at risk of violence in their under-resourced, poor communities, because men in the same communities are unable to achieve the desired form of masculinity and have to continue to rape women to produce the ultimate form of masculinity. Men who rape are depicted as monsters and beasts in exceptional cases such as war, but are seen as “normal” in their everyday settings (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013:28). The perpetration of sexual violence in a “normal” setting exhibits men’s expectations of themselves, and it further demonstrates how men in South Africa have created a masculinity that gives all men the option to rape in order to show their masculine identity.

### Conclusion

The heteronormative, patriarchal South African society has placed women in a category that relates to the nation-state. This has meant that traditional gender roles have assigned women with the identity of mother, wife, daughter and sister. The black lesbian body has disrupted this notion of gender in South Africa and has resultantly been seen as deserving punishment in the form of corrective rape. This chapter has demonstrated not only how heterosexuality has been harmful to women who transgress these gender norms, but also how traditional gender norms have been detrimental to men and their sense of manhood. This chapter has shown how men constantly need to reproduce their masculine identity because of gendered ideals of manhood, and how masculinity is produced through violence against women in the performative act of rape.



## **Chapter Five: Concluding Remarks**

### **Introduction**

This study has examined how masculinities are constructed in post-apartheid South Africa, and how the construction of a masculine identity has contributed to the high rates of sexual violence in the country. Masculinities focus on violence as a basis for demonstrating manhood, and therefore they affect the wellbeing of both men and women. This study has demonstrated how heterosexuality is deeply entrenched in the making of a masculine identity, and how heteronormativity has negatively impacted how South Africans view those who do not conform to this sexuality. Through the theories of rape presented by Louise du Toit, it is shown how Western models of understanding sexual violence do not fit the South African case given social, cultural, economic and political differences. This study reasons that sexual violence is used as the simplest form of violence against women because men have to constantly adhere to the prerequisites of an ideal masculine identity in order to maintain their manhood. It particularly focuses on sexual violence against black lesbian women who are othered in South Africa because they do not conform to the culture of heteronormativity. These women transgress traditional gender roles and are consequently punished for this through corrective rape. The purpose of Chapter Five is to provide a summary of the study. This chapter will also provide a discussion of the research questions' findings. It will end with a brief overview of possible future studies.

### **Argument of the study**

Chapter One provided introduced the study by outlining gender-based violence in South Africa. This chapter offers historical considerations of gender-based violence, which is important to understanding both the construction of masculinities and why black lesbian women are targets of sexual violence. The normalization of violence, including sexual violence, in South Africa is further demonstrated through various studies that examine how men use violence as a means to control and punish women, and how women view violent men as “real” men. This chapter demonstrates how heterosexual performances of strength are equated with masculine identities. Violence and physical aggression therefore allows men to demonstrate their masculinities. Furthermore, it provides insight into sexual violence against black lesbian women and how this violence exposes a vulnerability of masculinities. This vulnerability stems from constantly needing to engage in violent acts in order to prove their masculinity and power. Chapter One also provides possible reasons for gender-based violence. Finally, the research questions are presented in this chapter, along with the methodology of the study.

Chapter Two sought to provide a deeper understanding of the construction of masculinities in South Africa and how this construction relates to homosexuality. This chapter started by explaining how black bodies have been othered through the periods of slavery and colonialism. These periods allowed for defining the black body as hypersexual; differences between white and black were constructed as natural differences, which were used to subordinate Africans. These constructions of race and gender impacted narratives of the black body that are still used as stereotypes in the contemporary world.

Furthermore, Chapter Two sought to discuss how masculinity is constructed amongst black men in post-apartheid South Africa. Men are taught to strive towards a masculinity that highlights sexual behaviour and violence. This was achieved through the use of various studies that focus on the formulation of a masculine identity amongst young men in South Africa. What is highlighted in the research undertaken by various authors is that men are taught – through their masculine identity – that disrespecting women contributes to their manhood. Finally, this chapter demonstrated how homosexuality impacts the construction of masculinity in men in the heteronormative, patriarchal society of post-apartheid South Africa. Because rhetoric frames homosexuality as being a construct brought by Western imperialists, men are taught that homosexuality is unnatural to the African culture. This influences how men engage with homosexual bodies, and it results in the rape of black lesbian women as they are seen as betraying the natural gender order.

Chapter Three has examined theories of rape, which may assist in understanding the high level of sexual violence in South Africa. This chapter provided a definition of rape that coincides with the definition of the Sexual Offences Act of 2007. It is further demonstrated in this chapter how Western understandings of rape, and rapists, does little to aid the South African case because of social and cultural differences. As a result, the theories of rape developed by Louise du Toit (2014) have been utilized to account for the prevalence of sexual violence in the country. The theories take into account the South African history, the effects of poverty, the post-apartheid political landscape in South Africa in a patriarchal society and the ontological violence associated with rape.

Chapter Four sought to explain the corrective rape of black lesbian women by examining masculinity in South Africa and its relation to violence. This chapter begins by explaining how black women's sexuality has been determined throughout history. It demonstrates how black women's bodies and sexualities have always been made public. This is shown through slavery and colonialism. Corrective rape in contemporary South African society is indicative of how

the postcolonial state has adopted these beliefs about a black woman's body, which is explained in this chapter through the ideas of nationalism and women's relation to a national identity.

This chapter highlights how black lesbians are targeted for violence because they subvert women's identities that are suggested by men through heteronormative, patriarchal ideas of nationalism. Hence, the black lesbian body is symbolically what a true African woman is not, and it is therefore on the receiving end of sexualized violence. It is further demonstrated in this chapter how violence against women is a result of men adhering to idealized notions of masculinity. Chapter Four concluded by suggesting that men resort to violence as to prove their masculinity, while they simultaneously demonstrate that a successful masculine identity is not achievable.

#### Primary and secondary research questions

The main research question asks: What is the relationship between black lesbianism and heteronormative masculinity that shows the impossibility of achieving masculinity?

South Africa is a patriarchal society where men have ultimate control over most aspects of life. Masculine identities in such societies are favoured over feminine identities. As mentioned in the study, where there are favoured gender identities there are favoured masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities are derived from these favoured masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities differ across various contexts, but they possess common characteristics such as men being primary breadwinners of families, men having voracious sex drives and the ability of men to display their physical strength. This encourages men to become aggressive in order to showcase their masculinities.

Violence against homosexual individuals can largely be attributed to understandings of masculinity. Homosexual men who do not conform to hegemonic masculinities are not seen as "real" men. Similarly, lesbian women may be perceived as wanting to be men. These women are seen to disrupt traditional gender norms and are therefore punished. Black lesbian women can be perceived as threats in their communities: a danger to heterosexuality and a heteronormative way of life with specific gender roles. Men in their communities also view black lesbian women as threats to their claims to masculinity as they are sexually unavailable to men. What threatens men is that lesbian women ultimately live lives that have nothing to do with men.

The dominant culture of heteronormativity in South Africa suggests that the only acceptable sexual orientation is heterosexuality. Violence is used as a punishment for those who do not

comply with this culture. As this study has shown, heterosexual men are required to constantly prove themselves as masculine subjects. This is done through ritualized practices that allow men to assert their dominance over women in a patriarchal society. Sexual violence is one of the simplest ways a man can prove this dominance, as it can be used as a method of intimidation and humiliation. Although sexual violence against women demonstrates how men resort to violence in order to prove their masculinity, it simultaneously suggests that men resort to violence because a successful masculinity is unattainable. Sexual violence against women is therefore normalized because of the accompanying realization of a masculine identity. Men, however, need to constantly engage in acts of violence against women and other men in order to prove their manhood. A successful masculinity therefore relies on the continuous re-enactment of violence.

The secondary research asks: Can we consider the rape of black lesbian women as an attempt to attain and stabilize heterosexual masculinity?

As mentioned in the study, there are multiple factors that contribute to a successful masculinity in a heteronormative patriarchal society. Men who are unable to reach the idealized masculinity are not regarded as real men. This, as the study has shown, results in violence and aggression as it is an easy way for men to demonstrate a masculine identity. Both men and women regard tough, physically aggressive men as being “real” men given that violence has become so ingrained in the South African culture. Hegemonic masculinity in South Africa require men to adhere to certain characteristics in order for them to be considered men. In communities where black lesbian women are targets of sexual violence, certain men already face economic, cultural and social discrimination. Because of a desire to regain control, sexual violence against black lesbian women occurs. Violence against women, and black lesbian women specifically, allows men to prove their masculinity through their physical strength over a being they perceive as weaker. This study has demonstrated how masculinity is something that is essentially unattainable because violence is an ongoing process. However, sexual violence against black lesbian women can be seen as a way for men to attain and stabilize a heterosexual masculinity because it not only allows for the realization of a masculine identity, but also punishes those who do not follow a heteronormative sexual orientation.

### Recommendations for future research

This study has provided insight into how masculinities are constructed along the lines of violence. It has theorized how the impossibility of attaining masculinity has contributed to sexual violence against black lesbian women. A possible area of future research could focus

on how women view the construction of masculinity, and how women view violence as a process of attaining a masculine identity. Because the nationalist idea of the identity of a woman focuses on her role as a teacher of a culture, research into how women could potentially change the way masculinities are constructed amongst boy children would be helpful in order to understand the process of how a masculine identity is taught. Research could furthermore focus on men's roles in the production of the heteronormative culture of South Africa, and how this has negatively impacted the structure of South African society. In addition to this, more research can be done on how non-heteronormative identities are marginalized in institutions in the country.

Additionally, using the theorization in this study, more practical research can be done in order to understand the use of violence as a way for some heterosexual men to attain a successful masculinity. Practical research in this instance could provide insight into how men understand heterosexuality and the construction of masculinity.

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